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WAYS OF THE IELTS WINNERS

Ways of the IELTS Winners



By

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1. What does it take to be an IELTS Winner?

If you think it is only knowledge that will make you an IELTS winner, think again. Knowledge can only take you so far!

There are scores of graduates and even PhDs who have not managed to get a Band 7+ in the IELTS.

Of course, this was before the '*Ways of the IELTS winners*' existed!

The point is that **knowledge by itself is not sufficient to ace the IELTS.**

You need the other '**intangible**' qualities & smart Studying Strategies to make the thing work.

The subsequent sections will discuss some of these strategies, *but first...*

2. What is the IELTS?

International English Language Testing System or commonly called **IELTS** is an exam that assesses a person's English skills. There is no passing or failing score in the IELTS exam. Unlike other English exams such as TOEFL wherein you need to acquire a certain score to pass the test, IELTS is more focussed in gauging the individual's English skills. Each score in the IELTS exam expresses an individual's English level.

The IELTS exam is recognised by most universities around the world like Australia, UK, New Zealand, US and Canada. Most of these countries offer studies abroad as well as migration programs in their country either for permanent residency or work programs making the test an integral part of their application. Each area requires a certain level of English competency that will allow the examinee to be admitted at the university, gain entrance for permanent residency and get hired for a job application.

There are two versions of the IELTS Exams and each serves its own purposes. An examinee should know which of the two versions he must take before applying for the exams. Scores are not interchangeable and knowing the specific type of IELTS exam is necessary in completing your requirements for your study, immigration or work application.

Academic IELTS is commonly taken by those who are trying to obtain a degree in a university either for graduate or undergraduate studies. It is used basically in determining the student's English skills where English is the main language used during their course study. Meeting the required IELTS score is essential to gaining acceptance for your studies.

Academic IELTS is an improved English skills test for those who want to gain acceptance for their studies and are especially planning to study abroad. It consists of the four main areas of English skills (listening, reading, writing and speaking) wherein reading and writing are entirely different from that of the General IELTS. These two areas are more comprehensive and needs a thorough analysis by the examinee.

Academic IELTS exam is necessary as well for those who are applying for professional work abroad like nurses, doctors, dentists and physical therapists.

General IELTS is for individuals who are applying for immigration or working abroad. Employers and countries where English is the medium of instruction want to know the English levels of the migrants or workers before they accept their application. Obtaining the required score is important in being accepted for the job as well as in entering the country where you applied for your migration.

General IELTS is a much simpler test compared to the Academic IELTS consisting of the four main areas of English skills. Its main purpose is generally focussed on the individual's social survival at work and in the country s/he wishes to live. This gauges the individual's English skills in communicating at his/her work and living environment. Generally, the English skills required when migrating and applying for work is to have a basic and simple understanding of the English language allowing the person to express himself. Moreover, General IELTS for work application is for those applicants that are applying as skilled workers like carpenters, masons, waiters and plumbers.

However, considering the fact that the IELTS scores are not interchangeable, applying for an Academic IELTS exam can serve the purpose of all three applications. A minimum score of 5 will be accepted in getting into a university. Generally your score is dependent on the school's requirement. Some schools require a score of 5 while others require a score as high as 7 or 8. For immigration and job purposes a score of 5 is acceptable.

Where to Apply for an IELTS Exam?

IELTS exam is available worldwide. It has more than 500 locations in 130 different countries. It is jointly managed by the British Council, IDP - IELTS Australia and the University of Cambridge ESOL Examinations (Cambridge ESOL).

You can find the nearest IELTS Test Centre in your location by visiting their website (www.ielts.org). You can either call or send them an email to find more details and information on what you need to do in applying for your exam.

How to Apply for an IELTS Exam?

IELTS application can be filed in two ways. You can either send your application via mail or you can apply in person at the IELTS Test Centre.

Filling up the application form properly is very important when applying for your IELTS exam. Make

sure you have filled up all the necessary information and answered all the questions on the form before registering for your exam.

The following documents should be completed when filing your IELTS registration via mail or in person.

- Completed IELTS Application Form
- Completed IELTS Payment Form
- Receipt for your IELTS payment
- 2 latest passport size photos (not older than 6 months)
- Certified photocopy of the first page of your passport where your picture and personal details are found.

The IELTS Test Centre will send you a confirmation letter via email if your registration for the exam is sent via mail. If you applied in person your confirmation letter will be given to you upon completion of your application.

How much does an IELTS Exam Cost?

IELTS exam costs the same for both General and Academic exams. Currently it costs £110. There is a set test fee for the Test Centres in every country.

How long does an IELTS exam take?

Approximately, the IELTS exam takes about 2 hours and 45 minutes. The speaking exam can be taken on the same day or it can be scheduled for another day within seven days from the date of the exam.

How often is an IELTS exam given?

IELTS exams are usually given three or four times a month depending on the country and the IELTS Test Centre. Some IELTS exams can be arranged for particular institutions and sponsors as well.

How often can you take the IELTS Exam?

If the desired score is not met, you can take the IELTS exam after three months from the first test date you had taken the exam on.

How long is the score valid for?

IELTS scores are valid for up to two years. If you are not able to use your test score within the said validity period, you need to take the exam again if you are applying for your studies, immigration or work.

What your IELTS Score means?

The IELTS score is an individual's English level in using the English language. Scores are reported as band scores from 1 being the lowest up to 9 being the highest. The examinees are given an overall band score and separate scores for each of the areas in the Exam.

When is an IELTS exam result issued?

Results of IELTS exams are issued after two weeks from the date you have taken the exam. It is sent to you personally or it can be sent to five different institutions as specified by you on your application form.

2.1 What is the IELTS score used for?

Not all scores are created equal

The IELTS score is used for assessing the level of English needed for certain candidates or students in performing efficiently and effectively in their studies, immigration, work or training. Score requirements are set by the each of the institutions or organisations and may vary from one to another depending on their specific needs and requirements.

Enrolling in a College or University

When going for studies abroad especially in Australia, UK, Canada and the US, an IELTS score is one of the basic requirements. Certain colleges or universities require a minimum Academic IELTS score of 5 or as high as 7 or 8.

IELTS Score for Migration

Most individuals who are migrating to Australia, Canada or New Zealand need to show their English level before getting their visas at the respective embassy. Individuals are required to have a minimum General IELTS Score of 5.

IELTS Score for Training and Work

Those who are applying for professional training or work abroad like working as nurses, doctors or therapists need to have an Academic IELTS score of 7 or 8. This is one of the basic requirements especially for those who will be working in countries like US, UK, Australia or Canada.

Skilled workers like waiters, carpenters, plumbers and welders who are going to Australia, Canada or UK need a General IELTS score of 4.5 or 5 before they are accepted for the job they are applying. Having knowledge why you are being asked for an IELTS score when going for your studies, work or migration is a way of conditioning your mind for your IELTS preparation. If you want to pursue your career or migrate in another country you must properly prepare for your IELTS to fulfil your chosen career path as well as fulfilling your dreams in living abroad.

2.2 Structure of the IELTS

As the saying goes, ‘A familiar devil is better than an unfamiliar one’, it is best to familiarize yourself thoroughly with the structure of the IELTS before you proceed with the prep.

Listening, Reading, Writing and Speaking are the four components of an IELTS Test.

Listening

The IELTS listening test approximately takes 30 minutes. The test taker is asked to listen to a recorded material only once. There are four sections in the listening test that are presented in an increasing order of difficulty. The first and second sections are of general topics while the third and fourth sections are focussed on a certain study or training.

Reading

The IELTS reading test takes 60 minutes. The examinee is provided three reading texts where the questions are presented in increasing difficulty. There are around 40 questions in the reading exam that the test taker should answer in an hour.

Writing

The IELTS writing test takes around 60 minutes. There are two sections in the writing test that the examinee must complete in an hour. The first task is to complete a report based on the given information. This can be a graph, a diagram or a process. You are asked to describe the information given and write a report consisting of 150 words in 20 minutes.

The second task is writing an essay on a given topic. The test taker is given 40 minutes to complete this task and write 250 words. Of the two tasks, the second task carries more weight for getting the final band score for this component.

Speaking

The speaking test takes about 11 – 14 minutes. It is in the form of an oral interview wherein the

candidate is asked certain questions by the examiner. During the speaking exam, the candidate is asked questions to answer and express his/her opinions on certain topics and justify them.

The speaking exam is composed of three parts. The first part consists of general questions about the candidate, his life or his interests. The second part consists of a topic which the test taker has to discuss or talk about and the third part is a discussion of issues that are linked to the topic of the second part of the speaking test.

2.3 IELTS Bands

The IELTS is a 9-band test. Each band corresponds to a descriptive statement giving a summary of the English competence of a candidate classified at that level. Overall Band Scores can be reported in either whole or half bands.

The nine bands and their descriptive statements are as follows:

9 Expert User

Has fully operational command of the language: appropriate, accurate and fluent with complete understanding.

8 Very Good User

Has fully operational command of the language with only occasional unsystematic inaccuracies and inappropriacies. Misunderstandings may occur in unfamiliar situations. Handles complex detailed argumentation well.

7 Good User

Has operational command of the language, though with occasional inaccuracies, inappropriacies and misunderstandings in some situations. Generally handles complex language well and understands detailed reasoning.

6 Competent User

Has generally effective command of the language despite some inaccuracies, inappropriacies and misunderstandings. Can use and understand fairly complex language, particularly in familiar situations.

5 Modest User

Has partial command of the language, coping with overall meaning in most situations, though is likely to make many mistakes. Should be able to handle basic communication in own field.

4 Limited User

Basic competence is limited to familiar situations. Has frequent problems in understanding and expression. Is not able to use complex language.

3 Extremely Limited User

Conveys and understands only general meaning in very familiar situations. Frequent breakdowns in communication occur.

2 Intermittent User

No real communication is possible except for the most basic information using isolated words or short formulae in familiar situations and to meet immediate needs. Has great difficulty understanding spoken and written English.

1 Non User

Essentially has no ability to use the language beyond possibly a few isolated words.

0 Did not attempt the test

No assessable information provided.

2.4 The Myths of IELTS

IELTS Myths & Fears

Fear not: here are myth busters to your rescue

Myth: The IELTS Test is more difficult than any other English tests.

Fact: Comparing IELTS Test to TOEFL, GMAT or GRE; the IELTS Test is much simpler than the other three English exams. Each test is focussed in assessing different skills of the candidate. It only becomes difficult because of the pressure of meeting a required score to be accepted in a certain institution for your studies, work or training.

Myth: It is much easier to take the IELTS test in certain countries compared to other countries.

Fact: The IELTS test is standardised globally. The kind of exam given in each country is no different from the other countries. Candidates who are taking the exam, for example in the Philippines, are facing the same set of questions as those candidates who are taking the exam in India.

Myth: One gets better scores in certain IELTS Testing Centres.

Fact: This is more of a local version among those who have not met the required score in IELTS. This usually surfaces when one fails to achieve the needed score in one testing centre and obtains it from another testing centre.

Myth: I can choose the type of IELTS test I want to take.

Fact: Not really. Everything depends on the requirement of the school or organisation you are applying for. If the school or organisation requires a general or academic score then you have to follow this requirement before applying for your exam.

Myth: You cannot take the IELTS test more than 3 times.

Fact: This is not true. Anyone can take the IELTS exam as many times as s/he wishes even after meeting the required IELTS test score for the purpose of improving his/her score.

Myth: IELTS Test is easier in certain parts of the year and difficult in other parts of the year.

Fact: This has been contested many times. The formulation of an IELTS Test is distributed, implemented and scheduled randomly and no one knows what exactly they will be given in different parts of the year.

Myth: Some speaking test examiners are stricter compared to others.

Fact: This is a common misconception among test takers who have been taking the IELTS tests for the second or third time. Another thing is the discussions among test takers after getting out of their speaking test feeling very confident about the interview tests and start saying that the examiner is not strict. The truth is all examiners are trained and are marked for the consistency of their performance. The way they give their scores on a speaking test is based in a criterion that is similar for all examiners.

Myth: You get better scores in the reading exam if you are familiar with the topic.

Fact: Not true. Familiarity with the topic in the reading exam does not guarantee a candidate that s/he will be getting better scores. In fact, familiarity with the topic tends to relax the candidates and answer the questions too quickly. Being familiar with the topic comes as a distraction instead of being helpful as the questions should be read and answered properly and not in the way you know about the topic.

Myth: Writing scores are marked depending on the mood of the examiner.

Fact: Everyone has their good and bad days that can affect their work. It is but logical to come to this conclusion. Examiners are trained with this kind of job and are assessed for their consistency when marking exams based on the criteria as specified by the management of IELTS.

Myth: You get a lower score when you do not understand parts of the speaking test.

Fact: One thing you should remember when taking the IELTS test is that you are being assessed for your English communication skills. The thought of asking the examiner to repeat the question does not mean that you are not good in English. It is actually showing your communicative skills and getting an assurance that you have understood what was being asked. Asking the examiner to repeat the question is actually demonstrating your linguistic skills rather than answering the question without understanding what is being asked.

Myth: My score will suffer if my point of view is different from that of the examiner.

Fact: Your English skills are not dependent on the examiner's point of view. You are being assessed on how you construct and express your ideas on a given topic. Your scores in writing and speaking have nothing to do with the examiner's point of view. In fact, there is no way for any test taker to know what the examiner feels about what you have written or spoken about.

Myth: I lose points when the examiner tells me to stop talking during my speaking exam.

Fact: When the examiner asks you to stop talking on the second part of your speaking exams there is nothing to worry about. It means that the examiner has heard enough to assess your spoken English ability.

Myth: One can study successfully for the test on his/her own.

Fact: This actually depends on your level of understanding and how well you comprehend everything about the four components of the exam. One might have a misconception and think that getting into a review program for IELTS or for any exam for that matter, is all for profiteering. A guided review is better than reviewing on your own. You get to discuss with your fellow reviewers when you are enrolled in an IELTS preparation class. This allows you to speak the English language, express your ideas in English and get to learn more on how to develop the right way of taking your written exams and get them evaluated. There is no one to criticize your work when you are reviewing on your own and the room for improving yourself is too small.

Myth: Taking as many practice tests will give you better scores in IELTS.


Fact: It helps but the real essence of taking the practice tests is to know where you have committed the mistakes and how you can improve them and start formulating your own strategies whenever a certain type of question is presented to you. Taking the practice tests and checking your work is fine but without analysing the mistakes you have made there is no way you can improve your ability and increase your score.

Myth: Listening test is the most difficult part of the exam.

Fact: There is nothing easy or difficult in any of the four components of the IELTS exam. Everything is dependent on how the student feels after taking the exam. There will be parts where certain difficulties are met and the candidate might end up saying this part is more difficult than others.

Myth: Getting a good score in IELTS is a proof that I can always use it in the future.

Fact: You cannot use your IELTS test scores all the time. An IELTS score is valid only for two years and it will be accepted within that period alone.



**Without a strong grip
on the basics, it is
almost impossible to
beat the IELTS using
short cuts or other
tricks.**

3. The Winning IELTS Prep Strategies

Given the staggering diversity in the applicant pool, there can be **no ONE winning strategy** for IELTS.

However, having been a high scorer myself and having interacted with hundreds of high scorers from around the world, there is a clear-cut list of study materials that a majority of winners have used.

This is not to say that this is the ‘Exclusive’ list, but doing more from this list will open the door for you to reach your full potential.

So how do the Winners start their long journey towards IELTS success?

3.1 The First Step: Know yourself

Typically, the first step that IELTS winners take is to identify their own strengths and weaknesses. It needs a bit of analysis and a bit of taking some comprehensive tests under IELTS conditions.

Before you proceed with the actual preparation, you need to know where exactly you stand and how much ground you need to cover.

It helps to assess your strengths and weaknesses through a good quality test; one that is comparable to the actual IELTS test in both the quality of its questions and its scoring.

Here, it is very important that you do not attach too much significance to your score on this test – the test has to be purely of an indicative nature. You should neither get disheartened with a low score nor get complacent with a high score, for it can all change – for better or for worse – by the time you take the actual test.

Given the diversity of IELTS winners, and their educational background, some are bound to be strong in one or more areas of Reading while others could have their strengths in the Writing section.

You need to take a closer look at the IELTS syllabus and take two full-length practice papers. This will give you a good idea of where you stand and which IELTS areas you need to focus on.

The best source for these tests would be either **IELTS Practice Tests** by Peter May or **Cambridge Practice Test for IELTS 7** by Vanessa Jakeman.

3.2 Identifying your weak areas

Almost everyone has weak areas. Usually it is the Speaking if you do not use English at work or could be any of the other three sections based on your circumstances.

In some other cases, it is the ability to last the 3 hours.

More than anything else, the IELTS tests your power to sit and concentrate for a full three hours. ‘Careless’ Errors are usually only a symptom of lack of concentration.

It is wise to identify your weak area in the beginning itself and start planning to devote more time to it. In terms of the time spent, the improvements will be much stronger if you work on your weak areas.

Analyzing the results of your practice tests will clearly indicate where you need to focus, whether it is Reading, Speaking or your Concentration.



Strengthening the Foundations:

Once you have an idea of the areas on which you need to work harder through the diagnostic test, you can accordingly streamline your efforts. A good way is to review the textbooks at the school level, without going into too much detail. All four sections work on the basis of a fairly well defined set of rules. It is important to be familiar with these rules. Work on the basics for a couple of weeks – get the concepts right, clarify all your doubts, work through solved and unsolved examples – before you attempt further full length practice tests.

3.3 Working on your strong areas

Most people take their strong areas for granted and do not give sufficient time to brush up their knowledge.

This is probably what happened in Mary's case. She was so confident in Reading that she did not give it enough attention and as a result lost precious points.

One major advantage that you get in working on your strong areas is the confidence that you get when you crack problem after problem.

You should spend **at least one third of your preparation time on your strong areas.**

Now comes the time to identify which books/courses/study materials you need to address your weaknesses and boost your strengths.

3.4 Which is the Best Course/Book/Study Material for me?

Today's IELTS market offers a bewildering array of options. So much that you can spend days just going through what various test prep companies have to offer.

Here is a glimpse:

Weekend Course

There is a wide array of companies providing the weekend course for busy students.

This usually lasts 16 hours over two days and provides an Introduction to various sections of the IELTS with some tips and tricks.

Private Tutoring

This involves one-to-one instruction with an IELTS expert instructor.

It can range from a few hours to a few weeks depending on how much private tutoring you think you might need.

Classroom Course

This usually involves a classroom setting with a number of students and one or more instructors.

This is for people who prefer the classroom way of teaching.

Online Course

This is useful if you want to study at your own convenience without being restricted by the requirements of the tutor.

Also helps if you live in a place where there is no face-to-face instruction facility available.

Online Question Banks

This option is good if you want some extra practice in specific areas.

Good Old fashioned Books & Software

This is of course the option that a majority of the IELTS Winners take.

While studying from the right books is no guarantee for success, studying from the wrong books can be disastrous. You not only end up spending time on the wrong type of questions, you also never get sufficient practice on areas that you need.

Amongst the thousands of web sites and hundreds of books available in the market, you need to select the correct ones corresponding to your strengths and weaknesses.

The following section lists the easily available books that you can match to your own strengths and weaknesses.

3.5 Must Have Books

There is no particular *must have books* for IELTS. However, it is true that studying an English language book can improve your English skills. Choosing the right kind of book is not an easy task but selecting the book that best suits you is far better than just purchasing a book that is recommended to you.

One of the best ways in choosing an IELTS book for your review is to select the one that you understand best. There are certain IELTS books that are provided with a good summary and reviews that can attract you to buy them. Most IELTS books often go with practice tests and most of them are of the same presentation and this should not be your main concern. Focus on the skill preparation of the book. One good thing you can do is scan over the book. See how informative is the text in helping you prepare for the exam. Some books offer guidelines on how you should answer the different questions in an IELTS test. This will help you in many ways when sitting for the exam.

Some of the highly recommended books for IELTS test preparation are:

1. **IELTS Practice Tests by Peter May** is recommended for those who do not have much time in working through a course book. What is great about this book is the way it presents advices and diverse strategies on how the students can improve their skills. Candidates can try the suggestions made by the author and work out in checking their answers before going for one actual practice test. The book comes with an Explanatory Key for the students to correct their answers and find out why their answers are right or wrong.
2. **Instant IELTS Pack by Guy Brook – Hart.** This book is packed with numerous practice tests and activities that enhance the test taker's English skills in answering the questions in an IELTS exam. Lively discussions are what make the book more effective as the students are encouraged to participate on the practice lessons.
3. **202 Helpful Hints for IELTS Preparation by Gray Adams and Terry Peck.** This IELTS book is a well structured book providing hints and strategies and has enough practice tests. It is most helpful in getting through the writing test.

4. **Cambridge Practice Test for IELTS 7 by Vanessa Jakeman.** This is the latest series of the Cambridge Practice for IELTS series. Just like the first books that were out in the market, this IELTS book comes with a complete package of the four IELTS test components that helps the students in improving their scores in an IELTS exam.

Books to Avoid

Common Mistakes at IELTS Intermediate and How to Avoid Them by Pauline Cullen

And

Common Mistakes at IELTS Advance and How to Avoid Them by Julie Moore

These are two IELTS books that should be avoided. Both books fail to provide enough information and practice tests to meet the student's expectations. They are more concentrated in the use of grammar and articles. They are not sufficient for practicing and preparing for an IELTS exam.

3.6 Is private tutoring the Holy Grail of a high score?

Private tutoring is probably the most efficient way towards a high score. However, not many of us can spare the time or the money for this.

While this may give you the best chance of a high score, there are other paths that lead to the same result.

The Best ways to get the **maximum out of Private Tutoring** are:

- Ø First identify your strengths and weaknesses. It is highly likely that you will be weak in one or two sections rather than all four.
- Ø Focus the Private Tuition on the area of your weaknesses and study your strengths on your own.
- Ø Probably the most important thing is to select the instructor who has scored above the score that you are aiming for.

Most of the larger test prep companies are not very open when it comes to providing their instructor's actual scores on the IELTS, so you should be especially aware of the quality of the instructor you are getting.

Most winners avoid Private Tuitions or the In-person courses.

4. How do the IELTS Winners actually study?

It is all well and fine to have access to the same books as the Winners, but how do you get the same thing out of these sources that the winners get?

From close interaction with the IELTS winners, here is what you can learn.

4.1 Why the most important problems are the ones you get wrong

This is where the most learning lies, this is where you know immediately that your concepts are shaky and this is where the greatest opportunity to improve lies.

What winners do is to maintain a list of ALL the questions they get wrong. Then they revisit this list after about a week and then again after about a month. If after a month, they can still recall WHY they made the error, they strike out the problem; otherwise they keep the problem in their list.

In the words of Rags, an IELTS Winner:

'My best method of improvement was to start a notebook divided into four sections Speaking, Writing, Listening and Reading. If I got ANY problem wrong, I would put it in there - the whole problem. Before I studied every night, I would review this notebook. After all, these are the things that I would have gotten wrong if I had taken the IELTS without studying. THESE ARE WHAT I NEEDED HELP ON. And by seeing these every night, believe me, when I saw a similar problem, I didn't get it wrong again. That is what improvement is all about. What good is studying if you get the same thing wrong twice or three times? None. So get a notebook and record your errors, so that you become so familiar with these that you WANT to see them on the real thing. When you

see it on the real IELTS, you'll chuckle because it's the same problem that you saw every night when you spent 15 mins looking at that notebook of mistakes - and its CAKE TO YOU. ‘

-Rags (IELTS: 7.5)

Winners always NEED to know why they got a problem wrong. If the problem lies in their understanding of the concepts, they go back and study more.

4.2 What is the right time to book your IELTS Exam?

'I started preparing for IELTS in Nov. I had thought that I would just prepare for it and when I think that I am ready, I will go give the test. But that was not a very good idea. Without a fixed deadline, I could not focus very well. In January first week, I decided to pick a date in Jan end. Only after this did I get serious and did some meaningful work. So my advice is, do not spend a lot of time preparing for it. Give yourself 2-3 months, pick a date, and go for it!'

- Andy (IELTS: 7)

There are plenty of people who wait for the right time to start a project, right time to change their job, to change career and so on. Unfortunately, there is no such thing as the *Perfect time*.

The IELTS winners are only too aware of this and so they go and register for the IELTS. They don't wait for themselves to be 'Sufficiently' prepared first. Because they know that no matter how much you study, you will never be sufficiently prepared for a test like the IELTS.

Practice Tests:

It is important that the practice tests you attempt have been prepared by some authority, and that they reflect actual test questions and scores. Try taking the tests under simulated conditions with utmost concentration.

The complete test is of nearly five hours duration – a period long enough for our concentration to flag. It will take a couple of tests before you develop the rhythm for taking these tests.

Also, it is imperative that you get a good feedback on your performance in these tests – so that you can learn from your mistakes and make sure you do not repeat them. A mistake on the practice test must be looked upon as a learning opportunity, and not as something to fret about. Once you have practiced 4-5 tests, your scores are bound to improve, given that the level of the questions does not vary too much.

Winners write the practice essays at least a couple of times under controlled time conditions.

How much time do you need to prepare?

To a large extent, this is a function of your initial state of readiness.

The IELTS requires primarily two kinds of inputs: Speaking/Listening and reading/writing grammatically correct English (but subject to severe pressures of time). Both of these are skills acquired over many years of schooling, and the stronger your foundations in these subjects are, the easier it is for you to prepare.

Typically, I recommend that you start preparing at least 1-2 months before your test date. During this time period, your preparation will be divided into two parts – the initial 1-1½ months when you concentrate on strengthening your foundations by delving into the topics of the IELTS syllabus, and the final two weeks or so when you will focus on sample IELTS tests that give you a feel of the actual computer adaptive IELTS.

Time spent by most IELTS Winners averaged between 1 and 2 months.

All averaged 2-3 hrs per day and no less than 5-10 hrs on the weekends.

4.3 Why do IELTS Winners train like an Athlete?

- Ø Most of the Top athletes regularly do altitude training. This exposes them to a **tougher environment** than they would face in the real race.

If you want to be an IELTS Winner, you should practice with the tougher problems.

- Ø Top athletes usually **focus on one area** of training at a time, at least in the early stages. For example, they might focus on strength, endurance, agility, mobility, planning, and psychology for a few days and then move on to the next item.

In IELTS, in the beginning of your preparation, it is advisable to concentrate on one area, be that Reading, Speaking or one of the others.

Study in blocks

One Winner mentioned studying in 80 minute blocks without getting up to build stamina. Another Winner mentioned studying in 70 minute blocks with exact numbers of questions that are on the real IELTS to build stamina and skill. Many agree that the ability to handle the time constraints is nearly as important as solving the problem.

5. How did Kiran go from 5 to 8...

Kiran was a bright, smart working graduate intent on going to one of the Top 10 Medical Schools in the US.

In his own words:

*'It is completely true that the IELTS tests your ability to handle stress more than it does anything else. In retrospect, looking back at all the problems I encountered, most of them were very much like Cambridge tests, and only a few were darn near impossible to answer. If given time, each question was solvable. IELTS wants you to be stressed going into the exam so that a few difficult questions here and there will completely throw you off your pace and rattle you. When that happens, IELTS has got you and you are most likely not going to recover. That's what happened to me in the first test... **pre exam jitters... a couple of hard problems, and then it spiralled downwards as I lost hope and trust in my abilities.** There's no one easy way to relieve the stress... each person is different, but do what you can do, to limit any stress before and during the exam'.*

- Kiran (IELTS: 8, Second Attempt)

In his practice tests, Kiran was consistently scoring in the 7-8 range. However, when he actually went on to take his IELTS exam; he was shocked to see a score of 5. Instead of losing heart, Kiran took it as a challenge. He decided to take professional help.

No, he did not do any private coaching or take any face-to-face classes; instead he had detailed discussions about his preparation strategy and based on inputs from his coach, decided to transform it.

6. Why some people score higher the second time around

IELTS Winners typically approach the IELTS as a challenge or as an opportunity to "show their stuff", instead of viewing it as a scary hurdle that's trying to keep them out of their chosen college.

Most people who make a second attempt improve their score, often by about 1.5 points. Anecdotal evidence suggests that much of the improvement is not due to additional prep, but simply less anxiety because of familiarity with the test format and environment.

Sometimes, people are sold on the idea that the IELTS is an Aptitude test and by its very nature, does not allow for improvements in score by merely studying!!

As a Result, some students DO NOT prepare well enough the first time round.

However, by the time they have taken the IELTS and got a not so impressive score, they are Wiser. They then make a proper study plan and go through the right material. This, coupled with the first point, usually raises the score by about 1.5 points.

-

Creating a Study Schedule

You will need to develop a study plan for yourself that takes into account your strengths, weaknesses, study habits, and schedule. The most important thing to do before anything else is to familiarize yourself with the format of the exam. You can do this by reviewing the *IELTS.org* website or reading the introductory chapter in any IELTS study guide. Their website includes a good list of all the subject areas that are a fair game on the IELTS.

Next you should take your first full-length practice test to get a baseline score. Make a note of which areas you performed poorly on and make a plan to spend some extra time on them. Begin reviewing the science topics using study guides, notes from your college courses, textbooks, or anything else that you feel has good and relevant review. There is no “right” order to study the subject areas; this depends on where your strengths and weaknesses are. Once you feel confident in the facts and concepts that can show up on the IELTS, you should begin working through full-length IELTS practice tests on a regular basis. With every practice test you take, use your score to diagnose your weakest areas and go back to them for additional review.

Throughout your preparation for the IELTS you need to set aside time to take full-length practice tests at regular intervals, preferably once a week, to track your progress. Look at your score in the beginning, middle and end of your study program to see how well you are doing and to pinpoint areas you need more focus on.

It is recommended that you begin your preparation for the IELTS anywhere from 1-2 months before your test date. The key is to pace your-self and avoid cramming at the last minute, since this is not the type of exam that lends itself to last-minute preparation. If you are still in college, you might want to take a lighter course load during the semester in which you plan to study for the IELTS so you will have enough time to devote to it.

There is no one-size-fits-all study schedule for all IELTS test takers, but if you spend some time early in the process developing the best study strategy for you, it will pay off with great rewards.

What the Winners Know About Each Section of the IELTS and How to Beat It?

IELTS Tests is a skills exam. It challenges your listening, reading, writing and speaking skills. A good understanding of each of the four components will lead you to a better band score.

All IELTS listening questions are presented in the same order as you listen to them. Whenever you are going for a listening practice test it is advisable that you go over the questions first before taking the exam. Having an idea of the questions will give you a hint on what to look out for when the recorder is played.

Taking timed reading practice tests will develop your skimming and scanning skills. It also helps in creating your own time saving techniques when doing the exam. Knowing the different types of questions in the reading test will help you as well in having a good understanding of your abilities that is being tested.

The same thing with the writing component; your ability to understand and describe certain information that are presented in the form of a graph, diagram or process plays a vital role in writing a good report. Your ability to write and present your own point of views in a cohesive style is as well being challenged on the second part of the writing exam.

Providing full and direct to-the-point answers, how well you can talk at length on a certain topic and how you provide answers to questions on a particular topic are one of the ways of making it through the speaking test.

When it comes to the speaking test you have to take note that you do not need to follow an English or American accent at all. Just speak spontaneously about your ideas on what you think about certain topics that are being asked. Make sure that your answers are well understood and you speak with clarity.

Trying to speak like a British or an American will not help you when doing the speaking test. It might come as a distraction to the examiner why you are speaking this way when you have your own way of

speaking the English language. It will also be one of the reasons why you might not meet the necessary score you are trying to achieve. It may cause you to falter as well in answering the questions when adapting to these accents. Try to speak as naturally as possible if you want to make it on the speaking exam.

Most individuals will be having and developing their own strategies and techniques in beating the IELTS exam. However, the best way to beat it is to know your strengths and weakness and which abilities among the ones you have are being tested.

7. Beating the Four components of the IELTS

The first thing you must do to beat the four components of IELTS is to become comfortable with the English language. In doing this you should try to at least adapt to an English environment the best you could. Start watching English shows to accustom yourself with English, start speaking in English with your family and friends and ask them to do this favour for you while preparing for your exam. Try to speak the English language at work with your colleagues. Some may feel indifferent about it while some will be there to encourage you as well.

When doing the IELTS exam the golden rule is to follow the instructions properly. Following instructions is vital when taking the exam. Knowing and having the correct answer will not make it right if you do not follow the proper instructions. Make sure that you spell the words correctly.

The basic thing you should do to beat all the IELTS components is to develop the techniques, strategies and how to save time in answering the questions.

7.1 Listening

Passing the IELTS listening component will take a few techniques to do it. The first thing you have to remember is that the recorded material is presented in an increasing difficulty. While the first and second parts are much easier to listen to, the third and the fourth sections will be much faster than the first two sections.

Go over the questions being asked while the exam is yet to start. Understand what is being asked in each set of questions. You do not need to understand what is being said on the recorded material. What is important is you listen for the answer as you hear the dialogues. What is being said and what is written are not exactly the same. Most will be paraphrased. Do not stick on one question as this will distract your attention in listening. If you didn't hear the answer or you don't know the answer, move on to the next question. The answers are always given in order. If you missed one answer you can try guessing the answer for the number you missed.

The LISTENING component contains 4 sections with a total of 40 questions
TIME: 30 minutes

TIPS FOR TAKING THE LISTENING TEST

The academic listening test is one area of the IELTS where teachers cannot assist students in preparation as good as they can assist in other areas of the examination. This test area is based on the skill of listening, which is developed through individual practice over time, rather than by teacher instruction.

The listening test has four sections, each with 10 items (or questions). Each item is worth one mark. The items are designed so that the answers appear in order in the listening passage. During the test, you are given time to read the questions and write down and check your answers. Answers can be written on the Question Paper as you listen. When the tape ends, you are given ten minutes to transfer your answers on the Answer Sheet.

STRATEGY

Important words and main ideas in conversation are ones that will come up again and again. Listen carefully for any word or words that come up repeatedly. What words come up in nearly every statement made? These words with high frequency are likely to be in the main idea of the conversation.

For example, in a conversation about class size in the business department of a college, the term “class size” is likely to appear in nearly every statement made by either speaker in the discussion.

Voice Changes

IELTS expects you to be able to recognize and interpret nuances of speech. Be on the alert for any changes in voice which might register surprise, excitement or another emotion. If a speaker is talking

in a normal monotone voice and suddenly raises his voice to a high pitch, it is a clue that something critical is being stated. Listen for a speaker to change their voice and understand the meaning of what is being said.

Example:

Man: Let's go to Wal-mart.

Woman: There's a Wal-mart in this small town?

If the woman's statement was higher pitched, indicating surprise and shock, then she probably did not expect to be a Wal-mart in that town.

Specifics

Listen carefully for specific pieces of information. Adjectives are commonly asked about in IELTS questions.

Try to remember any main adjectives that are mentioned. Pick out adjectives such as numbers, colors or sizes.

Example:

Man: Let's go to the store and get some apples to make the pie.

Woman: How many do we need?

Man: We'll need five apples to make the pie.

A typical question might be about how many apples were needed.

Interpret

As you are listening to the conversation, put yourself in the person's shoes. Think about why someone would make a statement. You'll need to do more than just regurgitate the spoken words but also interpret them.

Example:

Woman: I think I'm sick with the flu.

Man: Why don't you go see the campus doctor?

Sample Question: Why did the man mention the campus doctor?

Answer: The campus doctor would be able to determine if the woman had the flu.

Find the Hidden Meaning

Look for the meaning behind a statement. When a speaker answers a question with a statement that doesn't immediately seem to answer the question, the response probably contained a hidden meaning that you will need to recognize and explain.

Example:

Man: Are you going to be ready for your presentation?

Woman: I've only got half of it finished and it's taken me five hours just to do this much. There's only an hour left before the presentation is due.

At first, the woman did not seem to answer the question the man presented. She responded with a statement that only seemed loosely related. Once you look deeper, then you can find the true meaning of what she said. If it took the woman five hours to do the first half of the presentation, then it would logically take her another five hours to do the second half. Since she only has one hour until her presentation is due, she would probably NOT be ready for the presentation. So, while an answer was not immediately visible to the man's question, when you apply some logic to her response you would find the hidden meaning underneath.



STRATEGY

Before you take the test

Take every opportunity to practice your listening skills. This can be accomplished by an activity as simple as listening to the radio. Both the academic listening test and the radio provide you with voices but you cannot see the speakers. (Listening to the television is also good, but you must not view the screen for the practice to be most effective.) To further improve your listening, consider answering a few simple questions about what you heard:

WHO was involved? **WHAT** happened? **WHEN** did it happen? **WHY** did it happen? **HOW** did it

happen?

STRATEGY

When you take the test:

Be sure to read through all the questions BEFORE listening. You will have a chance at it in the start and it is a wise use of those 20 seconds. By knowing in advance what information will be asked, you can listen more purposefully. It's like going on a *Scavenger Hunt*---you will have a (mental) list of things to look for. Without the list, how will you know what to find?

As you read over the questions PREDICT what types of answers you might need to find. For example, if the question refers to a telephone number, you know that somewhere in the text you will hear the word "telephone" and some numbers. Be very careful not to write the first telephone number that a speaker gives as sometimes another speaker will correct the number and give a new one.

STRATEGY

Answer all questions as you hear them. Do not rely on your memory. Although it is only 10 questions per section, you do not want to try to store all of the answers till the end. Write your answers on the question sheet as you listen and then transfer those answers to the answer sheet at the end. You will have 10 minutes at the end for this purpose. Also, this will ensure that your answers are carefully and thoughtfully completed. Grammar and spelling are important. It is unlikely that you will make a grammar error given that the maximum number of written words is three, however, if a word is misspelled, it could be marked wrong.

STRATEGY

Follow all directions. If a question asks for no more than three words—only use three words. Never leave a question unanswered. Do your best to eliminate the choices that are not fully correct and make an educated guess. Some answer options will be partially correct. These are given to distract you from reading all the choices thoroughly and finding the MOST correct answer.

SAMPLE TRANSCRIPT (3 speakers)

A discussion among three university students who have volunteered to organize an international music festival at their college.

Bobby: Thanks for coming to this meeting on such a short notice, Hameed and Mariela. It looks like we have just become the organizing committee for this year's international music festival. We've all just met so perhaps we should start by introducing ourselves and giving a bit of background information.

Hameed: OK, I'm Hameed. I finished three years of a music degree in Kabul, where I come from. This year I decided to study overseas to get to know a different part of the world. I'm also a big fan of European music, especially French and Italian. Those are the languages I studied, along with English. To me, music is a great way to learn about the rest of the world.

[Question #1] *I was in the music club at my university* so when I saw a notice asking for volunteers, I thought it would be a good way to meet people and get involved in something I really enjoy.

Mariela: Thanks, Hameed. My name is Mariela and I come from Spain. I'm doing graduate studies in English Literature. I went to some of the concerts at the festival last year and enjoyed them. I especially liked the video interviews. That was when I decided to get involved.

[Question #2] *I used to do music reviews for our student newspaper* back home in Madrid.

Bobby: Hi, I'm Bobby from Wales and I'm a 4th Year Journalism student. Music is my hobby. Last year I joined the organizing committee just like you have now and somehow this year I've ended up being in charge.

[Question #3] *I'm actually able to use my coordinating work on the festival toward a credit for one of my courses.* I have to write up a report on the festival, with recommendations so that's an extra motivation for me. I hope this is going to be a good experience for us all. OK, where would you like to start?

Hameed: How about a general overview of the festival? I don't really know much about it.

Bobby: Well, the music festival was started by the International Students' Society five years ago and has grown every year.

[Question #4] *It is held over 4 nights during Study Break—Wednesday to Saturday. Normally we*

have 3 concerts a night. Last year we tried to choose performers from different parts of the world that fit together in some way...maybe a similar theme. Or, we could feature a type of instrument, like the drums or keyboard.

[Pause]

Hameed: Who picks the performers?

Bobby: [Question #5] *It's up to us on the committee to decide.*

Mariela: You mean we get to pick all the performers ourselves? What a hard decision! There are so many to choose from.

Bobby: Well, that's the fun part. We have this catalogue of independent music agents. The performers are listed by language and have a short summary. We just have to go through it to find a good combination of performers who will attract an audience.

Hameed: Mariela mentioned something about interviews. How does that fit in?

Bobby: We set up cameras in the foyer of the music hall and did live interviews before, during the intermission, and after the show.

[Question #6] *Anyone from the audience could come up and talk about the film.* The Broadcasting and Journalism School set it up and ran the interviews. They were shown on big screens around the lobby and in the music hall. It went over really well. We had a long line up of students waiting to be interviewed on TV. Everybody wanted their minute of fame.

Hameed: Great idea!

Bobby: Yeah, it worked really well. We should certainly do something similar again.

Mariela: Maybe even develop the idea further...like a website with audience reviews and discussion so we can get as much participation and involvement as possible.

Bobby: Hey, that's a good idea!

Hameed: Can I ask a question? None of the music is in English, right? Is there any translation?

Bobby: Well, we do occasionally choose an English group, but only from unusual places where the dialect is so strong they sometimes need translation, like from the Caribbean, or even Wales!

[Question #7] *The majority of the groups in the festival perform in their native language, with lyrics on the big screen in English.* We've learned from experience that students don't like reading translated lyrics. Maybe they read too much already. Whatever the reason, most of the audiences just enjoy the music itself and aren't bothered with understanding the words.

Mariela: So how large an audience can we expect and how much does it cost to get in?

Bobby: It costs \$5 per concert or a \$20 pass for the whole event— all 12 concerts for the real music fan. We would have broken even last year

[Question #8] *except for a bad storm* before the Friday night performance---we almost had to

cancel the whole thing. But overall we had a good turnout— more than 2000 people in 4 days.

Mariela: That's what I was wondering about—the financial part. Where does the funding come from? What kind of budget do we have? (*Fade out.....*)

SAMPLE QUESTIONS: Multiple Choices

Objective: In this type of question, you will be given a stem, that is, a word, a part of a sentence or a question that must be completed by selecting one of the options given. There is only one correct answer; other options may be partially, but not completely correct.

Read the stem carefully. Eliminate the incorrect options. Select the most correct answer that would make the statement complete and correct according to what you heard.

1.) Hameed

- A. has done music reviews.
- B. Is currently in his third year.
- C. will be earning course credit for the music festival project.
- D. has played music professionally.
- E. Is enrolled in media studies.
- F. works as a journalist.
- G. has music club experience.

2.) Mariela

- A. has done music reviews.
- B. Is currently in her third year.
- C. will be earning course credit for the music festival project.
- D. has played music professionally.
- E. is enrolled in media studies.
- F. works as a journalist.
- G. has music club experience.

3.) Bobby

- A. has done music reviews.
- B. Is currently in his third year.

- C. will be earning course credit for the music festival project.
- D. has played music professionally.
- E. is enrolled in media studies.
- F. works as a journalist.
- G. has music club experience.

4.) The total number of concerts in the festival each year is

- A. five.
- B. three.
- C. twelve .

5.) Who chooses the musical performers for the festival?

- A. the committee members
- B. the International Students' Society
- C. the independent agents

6.) During the intermission, who is interviewed on camera?

- A. music students
- B. members of the audience
- C. the organizing committee

7.) Of the concerts in the festival,

- A. none are performed in English.
- B. most have lyrics translated on the big screen.
- C. many are performed in English.

8.) The festival did not make a profit last because of

- A. poor weather.
- B. the high price of admission.
- C. a lack of publicity.

1. **G**
2. **A**
3. **C**
4. **C**
5. **A**
6. **B**
7. **B**
8. **A**

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SAMPLE QUESTIONS: Sentence Completion

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Objective: In this type of question, you will be given an incomplete statement that must be completed using information you heard in the listening text.

Be sure to complete the statement using **three** words or less. The statements will be presented in the same order as you heard the information in the text.

- 1.) Bobby opens the committee meeting by asking for everyone to _____.
- 2.) In addition to English, Hameed also studied _____.
- 3.) Mariela attended and enjoyed the music festival _____.
- 4.) The festival might have a theme, or feature certain instruments like the _____.
- 5.) The performers in the festival are selected out of a _____.
- 6.) The audience interviews are shown in the music hall on _____.

- 7.) Mariela suggests that they could increase student interest and involvement by _____.
- 8.) The dialogue ends with Mariela asking about the festival's _____.

SAMPLE QUESTION ANSWERS

1. **introduce themselves.** (make introductions)
2. **French and Italian.**
3. **last year.**
4. **drums or keyboard.**
5. **catalogue.**
6. **big screens.** (big screen televisions)
7. **developing a website.** (creating a website)
8. **funding.** (money, financial matters)



HINTS

- Ø Listen carefully to the introduction to each section. This will give you useful information about the situation and the speakers.
- Ø Use the time at the beginning of each section to read ahead the questions and think about the topic.
- Ø Read the instructions for each task carefully. Remember to check the maximum number of words allowed.
- Ø Write all your answers as you listen — remember you won't hear the recording a second time.
- Ø Check that what you write makes sense in the context.
- Ø Answer all the questions even if you don't feel sure about an answer — you may have understood more than you think.
- Ø Wait until the end of the test to transfer your answers. You have ten minutes for this which is plenty of time.
- Ø Write clearly when you transfer your answers. If an answer isn't clear on your answer sheet, you will lose the mark.
- Ø Check your spelling (and grammar where necessary).

- Ø Don't worry if you have to cross out or change an answer.
- Ø Don't panic if you miss one question. Look ahead and concentrate on the next one.
- Ø Don't try to rephrase what you hear. Write down the words you hear which fit the question.

7.2 SPEAKING

The first thing you should remember about the speaking task is that most questions apply to you. It can be about your work, current news, technology and it can be any topic that you meet in everyday life situations. Answer the questions completely and do not leave any room for the examiner to formulate another question out of your answers. When you are asked to talk about a given topic, make sure to present your ideas clearly and speak properly for the examiner to understand what you are saying. Be sure to provide in depth answers to your opinions, explain and justify your answers and be able to describe, make comparisons or speculations when needed.

Practice makes perfect. Learning the strategies and techniques on how to beat the four IELTS components will give you more chances in getting higher scores during the IELTS exams.

The SPEAKING component consists of 3 sections: a basic interview; a short speech based on a prompt; and follow up questions about the speech.
TIME: 15 minutes

TIPS FOR TAKING THE SPEAKING TEST

The speaking part of the IELTS tends to create anxiety for the student; however, it is basically a conversation about YOU. This is one topic in which you are an expert. Lasting only 15 minutes, this test will give you an opportunity to talk about yourself, your plans for the future, your past studies, reason for which you are taking the IELTS, your country, your town or other interesting personal facts. Therefore, be prepared for these types of subjects. You should prepare something to say about them in advance, therefore a list of possible questions will follow.

In addition, the examiner will give you a topic to discuss; then give some follow-up questions about

your subject matter.

Remember to always use words and phrases with which you are comfortable. It is more important to be confident and accurate in your word choices than it is to attempt to use vocabulary that you are unsure of.

In **Part 1** of the test, you will answer general questions about yourself. This part lasts between four and five minutes. Use this time to become comfortable with the testing process and your examiner. Be relaxed, *there is no right or wrong answer*---you are simply evaluated on the manner in which you give your answer.



What is the examiner listening for?

- The rhythm of your speech: Does it flow naturally? Are your ideas presented in a logical order?
- The effectiveness of your word choices: Is your vocabulary adequate for the topic you are discussing? Are your descriptions understandable based on your choices?
- The correctness of your grammar: Do you have satisfactory subject-verb agreement and use correct verb tenses? Are you selecting effective adjectives and adverbs?
- The clarity of your pronunciation: Are your words and sentences enunciated clearly and smoothly?

Before you take the test

- Ø Ask your friends or family members to answer some of the sample interview questions. Listen to their answers and decide which ones are the most interesting and well-presented.
- Ø Write down as many things about yourself as you can in three minutes.
- Ø Ask a friend to be your examiner and conduct a mock interview using the sample questions.
- Ø Ask friends or family members to answer some of the sample questions about you. Listen for details and antidotes that you may have forgotten about yourself.

STRATEGY

Sample Questions for Part 1

1. What is the meaning of your name? Why do you think it was selected for you?
2. Does your name reflect your personality? What characteristics come to mind?
3. Describe your hometown. What do you like and dislike about it?
4. What languages are spoken in your country? Are there regional dialects?
5. Where did you go to school? How important do you think education is for future success?
6. What is the favorite food in the region where you live?
7. Describe your leisure time activities. Do you have certain interests or hobbies that you enjoy?
8. How many people are in your immediate family and what do they do?
9. What is your dream job? Why would you like to work in that field?
10. Are there any interesting historical monuments in your town? Do tourists come to see these sights?

When you take the test

HINTS

- Ø Listen carefully to the question and seek clarification if you do not fully understand what is being asked.
- Ø Answer all parts of the question fully, using clear explanations and vivid descriptions.
- Ø Add length to some of your answers using short anecdotes or quotes from others.

STRATEGY

When you are in the test, smile and look the examiner in the eye. Try to be friendly and look as though you are enjoying the conversation. This has a big effect on the examiner. If an examiner has to talk with someone who doesn't talk much, doesn't smile at all and who clearly doesn't want to be there, then it has a negative effect on the examiner. Being nervous is fine. The examiner understands that and will try and put you at ease. But be friendly. It makes a difference.

Don't worry about the occasional mistake. The examiner will expect some mistakes - after all, English is a foreign language for you and people make mistakes in speaking foreign languages. The examiner is not making a note of every single mistake that you make. This would be impossible to do and concentrate on your speaking. He will more likely get a general impression of your English accuracy so individual errors don't matter. More important is your communication.

You have to talk. Without your talking input, the examiner can't grade you very well. Try and give as full an answer as you can so that you show the examiner that you are comfortable at talking at length and can communicate well. Don't do this to extremes though. When you have finished what you have to say, stop. Don't try and force more out as it will probably be strained and repetitive. The examiner will see that you have finished and will give you the next question. Similarly, you won't be able to answer all questions at length. Different people can talk about different questions more and the examiner knows this. If you don't know much about something, say so and then say what you do know. When you're finished, the examiner will give you another question. You can't duck out of every question though - the responsibility is on you to talk.

Don't try to be too clever. Just try and talk normally as that is when you will perform at your best. If you try and extend yourself too much, then that is when you will make the most errors.

Perfection is not needed. You can still make some errors and get a 9 (not many errors though). So don't let making errors upset you. Get on with the talking and concentrate on your communication.

One thing that puts candidates off is that the speaking test is recorded. This is done so that, if necessary, the speaking can be re-marked. If the bands for a candidate's writing and speaking for instance are very different, then the candidate's test is re-checked. If the speaking was not recorded, then this could not be done. This doesn't happen very often. Sample recordings are also sent to the IELTS administration to be monitored to make sure that examiners are doing a good job and assigning the correct bands. So try and forget that the recorder is there and get on with answering the questions.

In **Part 2**, you will have more time to thoroughly discuss one topic. The examiner will provide a subject and you will have 1 to 2 minutes to speak about it. You will be given one minute to prepare and to take short notes. After your talk, the examiner will then ask one or two follow-up questions.



What is the examiner listening for?

- Adequate coverage of the topic: Did you speak at length with full explanations of your thoughts?
Did you use appropriate grammar and vocabulary?

Before you take the test

STRATEGY

1. Read a newspaper or watch a news program on television every day. This will expose you to information and viewpoints on current events in the world.
2. Select an issue or event in the news. Conduct enough research so that you have an adequate vocabulary list of related words. Think about your position or opinion on this matter and how you would express those feelings in a professional manner.
3. Think about how this issue or event impacts you personally. Be certain to use examples from your own life when discussing a topic.
4. Practice comparing and contrasting events and people in the news, remembering to be balanced in your descriptions of each side.

Sample Questions for Part 2

1. Discuss what has been the greatest discovery in history. What one invention or piece of knowledge has changed more lives for the better?
2. Who is your hero? Why is this person someone whom you look up to and wish to be like?
3. How has technology changed our society? What are the positive and negative aspects of living in the age of electronics?

When you take the test

STRATEGY

1. After being given your topic to discuss, quickly write a few notes to guide your talk. Simply write keywords or names to prompt you to include that information. As you speak, refer to the list of words and expand with short stories and details.
2. Always include examples from your own life. This gives your talk more color, but most importantly, personal experiences and opinions are easier to express than memorized facts.

In **Part 3** of the test, you and the examiner will engage in a discussion of more abstract issues and concepts which are thematically linked to the topic you talked about in Part 2. The discussion lasts between four and five minutes.



What is the examiner listening for?

- Your ability to make connections and draw conclusions: Can you relate the topic to events in world or your own life? Can you compare and contrast the topic with related information?
- Your ability to present and defend your position: Can you use persuasive language to justify your opinion? Are you using clear and convincing language to communicate your assumptions?

Before you take the test

STRATEGY

1. Read a newspaper or watch a news program on television every day. This will expose you to information and viewpoints on current events in the world.

2. Select an issue or event in the news. Conduct enough research that you have an adequate vocabulary list of related words. Think about your position, or opinion on this matter and how you would express those feelings in a professional manner.

-

SAMPLE: SECTION 2

Describe a favorite holiday destination that you like.

You should say:

- When you first went there.
- How you get there.
- What you do when you're there.
- And explain why this place is so special for you.

So, you can see the format of this section. The practice procedure is as before. Check out other question types and soon you will be able to develop your own. Then practice them with someone or by yourself. Soon, talking for 2 minutes without stopping won't be a problem. Remember you don't have to talk fast or without breaks. They want you to talk normally. Talk at a normal speed, pause to take breaths and take time to consult your notes to give yourself ideas about what to talk about next. The follow up question to end Section 2 is not so important that it needs to be practiced as it only requires a few words as an answer. An example question from the examiner for the subject above could be:

"Do you think I would enjoy a holiday in this place too?"

The candidate would just be expected to say something like:

"Oh yes, I think so."

Or:

"May be not. It might be too hot for you."

You can see that nothing very long is required.

At this point I'd like to explain about the 1 minute preparation time and the notes that you can write during it. First of all, use your preparation time and make notes. Before you begin your monologue, you will have 1 minute to prepare for it. Some people think that they don't need the time at all and will start straight away. Very often these people will dry up early and be at a loss about how to continue. Use your time. Someone starting straight away does not get any advantage at all over someone who takes the full minute to prepare.

So, what should you write in your notes? First of all, don't try and write out your whole talk word for word. You don't have enough time. Looking at the question above (which is a typical layout for this section) you can see that there is a main question (Describe a favorite holiday destination that you like.) and then 3 mini-questions following (Say when you first went there, how you get there, what you do when you're there and explain why this place is so special for you).

These questions are here to help you as they give you ideas to talk about and give your talk a bit of structure. However, it asks you to talk about these things so you should talk about them. In your notes quickly jot down one or two ideas for each of the questions, so that they will remind you about things to talk about when you look at your notes during your talk. Finally, if you have time, maybe make a note of something from your own experience connected to the talking theme. When you are talking about something from your own experience, it is easier to talk at length. For example, for the question above, you could be just finishing and still have 45 seconds left to talk. You could be saying why the place is so special to you. As you run out of ideas you could give an example out of your own experience. You could say:

"Actually the fact that I like the place so much is shown from something that happened to me the last time I was there. I was in a restaurant having some food and..."

The subject of your story doesn't matter as you are still on the subject of your talk. The main thing is that it's keeping you talking.

Sample Questions for Part 3

Remember that the topic you talk about in Part 2 is your only clue to the possible follow up discussion in Part 3.

As you prepare and speak about your topic, think about how it might be expanded and viewed from different angles. If your topic is **art**, it is likely that you will be asked to consider:

- Ø **The impact of art on society.**
- Ø **How art is reflective of both the artist and the time period in which he lived.**
- Ø **The many uses of art: expression, marketing, communication of values.**

In Part 3, you will zoom out the topic in terms of how it compares to other similar topics; how it can be related to other periods of time; or how you might predict its perception globally.

When you take the test

STRATEGY

Don't be reluctant to speak hypothetically using conditional "if-then" statements to demonstrate your ability to manipulate the topic and its possible aspects.

SAMPLE: SECTION 3

Section 3 really carries on from where Section 2 left off. The examiner will ask you questions that are related to the subject that you talked about in Section 2. For example, for the question we looked above at about a holiday destination, the examiner might choose to ask you questions about tourism and the airline industry. The examiner will have a set of questions to ask you. How many he asks depends on how long you talk for in your answers. None of the questions will be of a technical nature or require any specialist knowledge as that would be unfair, but you will be expected to give your opinion on what is asked you.

So, let's look at some examples.

Tourism

- Can you predict any major changes that could happen in the Tourism Industry over the next 50

years?

- Can you compare the tourism industry in your country today with the tourism industry when your grandparents were young? Can you identify some of the factors that have led to the Industry success of the airline industry?

Airline

- Can you suggest any ways in which air travel could be made safer?

You can see that the questions here are more analytical and require more thought than the questions in the previous sections.

Regarding practice, the procedure is as in the previous sections. You need to get someone to do the questions with you or do them alone and then develop your own questions and practice with them.

7.3 READING

In beating the reading exam the first thing you need to know is to develop the habit of scanning, skimming and paraphrasing. There is a big difference between scanning and skimming. Scanning is going over the reading passage to get an idea of what is the topic all about. Skimming is when you are looking for some details or information. Most of the questions are paraphrased. They are written differently from the way you read them on the reading passage.

There are several types of questions that go with the reading exam. Each question is looking for a particular ability that you need to apply when answering them. Another thing is you should know in which questions you are performing well and in which questions you are taking much time in answering. If you take time in answering a particular type of question, leave it for the last part so you will not get stuck in taking too much time on these types of questions. First answer questions which are easier for you to answer.

There are questions wherein you do not need to go over the reading passage to get the answers. Such questions need common sense and are easily derived if you are able to make your own conclusions. There are questions whose answers are not on the reading passage. An understanding of the whole passage will provide you the answers to these questions. During your practice tests you will find all these type of questions and you can easily compare them when you sit during the exams. Knowing the type of questions and how you go about them will help you get a better score in reading.

*The READING component has 3 passages of reading with questions following each passage. 40 questions total.
TIME: 60 minutes*

*TIPS FOR TAKING THE
READING TEST*

The reading part of the test has three sections. You will have 60 minutes to complete the test. There is no extra time given at the end of the test to transfer your answers to the answer paper (like in the listening test), therefore your answers must be on the answer paper at the end of the 60 minutes. The test has 40 questions based on a series of 3 texts. The total length of all the texts combined is between 2000 and 2750 words.

As in all the different parts of the IELTS, the Reading Test gets progressively more difficult. In each section of the reading test, there will be one text with 12 to 14 questions to answer in several different formats. The types of questions will follow. The texts will come from magazines, books and journals and are written for general interest or for an academic, although non-specialist reader. At least one text will contain a logical argument. If there are any technical words that you would not be expected to know, a short glossary will be provided.



What type of questions will you be asked?

- Ø Multiple choice questions
- Ø Short answer questions
- Ø Completion questions: completing sentences, completing notes, completing a summary, completing a graphic
- Ø Matching a bank of headings to identify paragraphs or parts of text
- Ø Matching a bank of writer's views/claims/information with the text
- Ø Identification of information in the text
- Ø True & False (or answer not given)
- Ø Matching lists/phrases
- Ø Classification questions

Before you read

STRATEGY

Select several passages of reading that are between 500 and 900 words in length. You can even start with a simple newspaper or magazine article. There is no magic or secret method to becoming a better reader. All it takes is lots of practice.

Practice the following reading techniques to assist you in becoming a more efficient reader.

SKIMMING

Skimming is reading fast to get the “gist” (general idea) of the text. There are different techniques of doing this. You can run your eyes over the text, getting the overall meaning, not stopping at words that you don’t understand. Stopping for unfamiliar words will slow you down when skimming. The important thing with skimming is speed. Another way to skim is to just read the first and last paragraphs of a text. You could also just read the title, subtitles and illustrations, if there are any. The first method ---reading it quickly for the gist--- is usually best; however, it depends on your reading speed. Your speed will quickly improve with practice.

SCANNING

Scanning is also a valuable technique because you already know how to do it. This is the technique you use when you are reading a telephone book or a dictionary. You are not starting at the top and reading every line back and forth as you would read a novel. You are moving your eyes around the text, back and across and up and down. You are searching for some specific information: a word or a name. This is useful on the IELTS because you will often have to find specific information. You read the question and then you search for key words or ideas associated with the question in the text. This is a bit more difficult to practice than skimming. You can practice by having a friend ask you key words and phrases from a text that you both have read. Just like with skimming, frequent practice will improve your speed.

When you take the test

STRATEGY

- Ø Don’t spend too long on a single question as that will reduce your time for answering questions that could be easier for you.
- Ø Sometimes leaving a question and coming back later can help you answer it too. Leave any questions that you have spent too long on and come back at the end of the test if you have time.
- Ø If the question has a ‘yes/no/not given’ answer, the answer you are looking for does not exist as

it could be a 'not given' or NI. Be aware so you don't waste time looking for something that isn't there.

- Ø Read the questions and instructions so you don't make a silly mistake. For example, people often will mix the yes/no answers with the true/false answers and write yes as an answer instead of true or vice versa.
- Ø If the question asks for no more than 3 words, use no more than 3 words. Writing 4 words or more is wrong and is subject to penalty.
- Ø One area that students don't like is that, in the reading test, good grammar and spelling are important. The grammar part is not as important as you can't make many grammar errors in 3 words (the maximum you use in the reading test) but, if you spell something wrong, it will be marked as wrong.
- Ø Time management is an important thing to be aware of. You have a number of texts to read and 40 questions to answer in 1 hour. If you spend too long on one part, you may find that you won't have enough time to finish all the questions, some of which could be quite easy.

READING PASSAGE 1

FINDING THE LOST FREEDOM

Paragraph 1

The private car is assumed to have widened our horizons and increased our mobility. When we consider our children's mobility, they can be driven to more places (and more distant places) than they could visit without access to a motor vehicle. However, allowing our cities to be dominated by cars has progressively eroded children's independent mobility. Children have lost much of their freedom to explore their own neighborhoods or cities without adult supervision. In recent surveys, when parents in some cities were asked about their own childhood experiences, they remembered having more, or far more, opportunities for going out on their own, compared with their own children today. They had more freedom to explore their own environment.

Paragraph 2

Children's independent access to their local streets may be important for their own personal, mental and psychological development. Allowing them to get to know their own neighborhoods and communities gives them a 'sense of place'. This depends on 'active exploration', which is not

provided for when children are passengers in cars. (Such children may see more, but they learn less.) Not only is it important that children be able to get to local play areas by themselves, but walking and cycling journeys to school and to other destinations provide genuine play activities in themselves.

-
Paragraph 3

There are very significant time and money costs for parents associated with transporting their children to school, sport and to other locations. Research in the United Kingdom estimated that this cost, in 1990, was between 10 billion and 20 billion pounds.

Paragraph 4

The reduction in children's freedom may also contribute to a weakening of the sense of local community. As fewer children and adults use the streets as pedestrians, these streets become less sociable places. There is less opportunity for children and adults to have the spontaneous sense of community. This in itself may exacerbate fears associated with assault and molestation of children, because there are fewer adults available who know their neighbors' children, and who can look out for their safety.

Paragraph 5

The extra traffic involved in transporting children results in increased traffic congestion, pollution and accident risk. As our roads become more dangerous, more parents drive their children to more places, thus contributing to increased levels of danger for the remaining pedestrians. Anyone who has experienced either the reduced volume of traffic in peak hour during school holidays, or the traffic jams near schools at the end of a school day, will not need convincing about these points. Thus, there are also important environmental implications of children's loss of freedom.

Paragraph 6

As individuals, parents strive to provide the best upbringing they can for their children. However, in doing so, (e.g. by driving their children to sports practices, school or just recreation) parents may be contributing to a more dangerous environment for children in general. The idea that 'streets are for cars and back yards and playgrounds are for children' is a strongly held belief, and parents have little choice as individuals but to keep their children off the streets if they want to protect their safety.

-
Paragraph 7

In many parts of Dutch cities, and some traffic-calmed precincts in Germany, residential streets are

now places where cars must give way to pedestrians. In these areas, residents are accepting the view that the function of streets is not solely to provide mobility for cars. Streets may also be for social interaction, walking, cycling and playing. One of the most important aspects of these European cities, in terms of giving cities back to children, has been a range of ‘traffic calming’ initiatives, aimed at reducing the volume and speed of traffic. These initiatives have had complex interactive effects, leading to a sense that children have been able to ‘recapture’ their local neighborhoods, and more importantly, that they have been able to do this in safety. Recent research has demonstrated that children in many German cities have significantly higher levels of freedom to travel to places in their own neighborhoods or cities than children in other cities in the world.

Paragraph 8

Modifying cities in order to enhance children’s freedom will not only benefit children. Such cities will become more environmentally sustainable, as well as more sociable and more livable for all city residents. Perhaps it will be our concern for our children’s welfare that convinces us that we need to challenge the dominance of the car in our cities.

QUESTIONS

Questions 1-5 **TRUE or FALSE or NI**

Read statements 1-5 which relate to Paragraphs 1, 2, and 3 of the reading passage.

Answer T if the statement is true, F if the statement is false or NI if there is no information given in the passage. Write your answers in the spaces numbered 1-5 on the answer sheet. One has been done for you as an example.

Example

The private car has made people more mobile.

Answer: True

Questions

1. The private car has helped children have more opportunities to learn.
2. Children are more independent today than they used to be.
3. Walking and cycling to school allows children to learn more.

4. Children usually walk or cycle to school.
5. Parents save time and money by driving children to school.

ANSWERS

1. False
2. True
3. NI
4. False
5. False

Questions 6-9 **MATCHING PROBLEMS & CAUSES**

In Paragraphs 4 and 5, there are FOUR problems stated. These problems, numbered as questions 6 through 9, are listed below. Each of these problems has a cause, listed A through G.

Find the correct cause for each problem and write the corresponding letter A-G, in the spaces numbered 6-9 on the answer sheet. One has been done for you as an example.

Example

There are more causes than problems so you will not use all of them and you may use any Cause more than once.

Example: PROBLEM: low sense of community feeling

Answer: CAUSE: F reduced freedom for children

Problems

6. Streets become less sociable.
7. Fewer chances for meeting friends
8. Fears of danger for children
9. Higher accident risk

Causes

- A. few adults know local children
- B. fewer people use the streets
- C. increased pollution
- D. streets are less friendly
- E. less traffic in school holidays
- F. reduced freedom for children
- G. more children driven to school

ANSWERS

6. B

7. B/A

8. G/C

9. G

-

-

Questions 10-14 STATEMENT COMPLETIONS

Questions 10-14 are statement beginnings which represent information given in Paragraphs 7 and 8. In the box below, there are some statement endings numbered 1-10.

Choose the correct ending for each statement. Write your answers 1-10, in the spaces numbered 10-14 on the answer sheet.

One has been done for you as an example. *There are more statement endings than you will need.*

Example

By driving their children to school, parents help create.....

Answer: 1. a dangerous environment

-

Statements

10. Children should play.....

11. In some German towns, pedestrians have right of way.....

12. Streets should also be used for.....

13. Reducing the amount of traffic and the speed is.....

14. All people who live in the city will benefit if cities are.....

Statement Endings

1 ... dangerous environment.

2 ... modified.

3 ... on residential streets.

4 ... modi cities.

5 ... neighborhoods.

6 ... socializing.

- 7 ... in backyards.
- 8 ... for cars.
- 9 ... traffic calming.
- 10 ... residential.

Answers

- 10. 7
- 11. 3
- 12. 6
- 13. 9
- 14. 2

READING PASSAGE 2

RISING SEA

-

Paragraph 1 INCREASED TEMPERATURE

The average air temperature on the surface of the earth has risen this century, as has the temperature of ocean surface waters. Because water expands as it heats, a warmer ocean means higher sea levels. We cannot say definitely that the temperature rises are due to the greenhouse effect; the heating may be part of a ‘natural’ variability over a long-time scale that we have not yet recognized in our short 100 years of recording. However, assuming the build-up of greenhouse gases is responsible and that the warming will continue, scientists --and inhabitants of low-lying coastal areas-- would like to know the extent of future sea level rises.

Paragraph 2

Calculating this is not easy. Models used for the purpose have treated the ocean as passive, stationary and one-dimensional. Scientists have assumed that heat simply diffused into the sea from the atmosphere. Using basic physical laws, they then predict how much a known volume of water would expand for a given increase in temperature. But the oceans are not one-dimensional, and recent work by oceanographers, using a new model which takes into account a number of subtle facets of the sea — including vast and complex ocean currents — suggest that the rise in sea level may be less than some earlier estimates had predicted.

Paragraph 3

An international forum on climate change, in 1986, produced figures for likely sea-level rises of 20 cm and 1.4 m, corresponding to atmospheric temperature increases of 1.5 and 4.5 degree centigrade respectively. Some scientists estimate that the ocean warming resulting from those temperature increases by the year 2050 would raise the sea level by between 10 cm and 40 cm. This model only takes into account the temperature effect on the oceans; it does not consider changes in sea level brought about by the melting of ice sheets and glaciers, and changes in groundwater storage. When we add on estimates of these, we arrive at figures for total sea-level rises of 15 cm and 70 cm respectively.

-
-
-

Paragraph 4

It's not easy trying to model accurately the enormous complexities of the ever-changing oceans, with their great volume, massive currents and sensitively to the influence of land masses and the atmosphere. For example, consider how heat enters the ocean. Does it just 'diffuse' from the warmer air vertically into the water, and heat only the surface layer of the sea? (Warm water is less dense than cold, so it would not spread downwards). Conventional models of sea-level rise have considered that this is the only method, but measurements have shown that the rate of heat transfer into the ocean by vertical diffusion is far lower in practice than the figures that many modelers have adopted.

Paragraph 5

Much of the early work, for simplicity, ignored the fact that water in the oceans moves in three dimensions. By movement, of course, scientists don't mean waves, which are too small individually to consider, but rather movement of vast volumes of water in huge currents. To understand the importance of this, we now need to consider another process — advection. Imagine smoke rising from a chimney. On a still day it will slowly spread out in all directions by means of diffusion. With a strong directional wind, however, it will all shift downwind, this process is advection — the transport of properties (notably heat and salinity in the ocean) by the movement of bodies of air or water, rather than by conduction.

-

Paragraph 6

Massive ocean currents called gyres do the moving. These currents have far more capacity to store heat than does the atmosphere. Just the top 3 m of the ocean contains more heat than the whole of the

atmosphere. The origin of gyres lies in the fact that more heat from the Sun reaches the Equator than the Poles, and naturally heat tends to move from the former to the latter. Warm air rises at the Equator, and draws more air beneath it in the form of winds (the “Trade Winds”) that, together with other air movements, provide the main force driving the ocean currents.

Paragraph 7

Water itself is heated at the Equator and moves pole-ward, twisted by the Earth’s rotation and affected by the positions of the continents. The resulting broad, circular movements between about 10 and 40 North and South are clockwise in the Southern Hemisphere. They flow towards the east at mid-latitudes in the equatorial region. They then flow toward the Poles, along the eastern sides of continents, as warm currents. When two different masses of water meet, one will move beneath the other, depending on their relative densities in the subduction process. The densities are determined by temperature and salinity, the convergence of water of different densities from the Equator and the Poles deep in the oceans causes continuous subduction. This means that water moves vertically as well as horizontally. Cold water from the Poles travels as depth — it is denser than warm water— until it emerges at the surface in another part of the world in the form of a cold current.

Paragraph 8 HOW THE GREEN HOUSE EFFECT WILL CHANGE OCEAN TEMPERATURES

Ocean currents, in three dimensions, form a giant ‘conveyor belt’, distributing heat from the thin surface layer into the interior of the oceans and around the globe. Water may take decades to circulate in these 3D gyres in the top kilometer of the ocean, and centuries in the deep water. With the increased atmospheric temperatures due to the greenhouse effect, the oceans conveyor belt will carry more heat into the interior. This subduction moves heat around far more effectively than simple diffusion. Because warm water expands more than cold when it is heated, scientists had presumed that the sea level would rise unevenly around the globe. It is now believed that these inequalities cannot persist, as winds will act to continuously spread out the water expansion. Of course, if warming changes the strength and distribution of the winds, then this ‘evening process’ may not occur, and the sea level could rise more in some areas than others.



QUESTIONS

Questions 15-20 MATCHING HEADINGS

There are 8 paragraphs numbered 1-8 in Reading Passage 2. The first paragraph and the last paragraph have been given headings. From the list below numbered A through I, choose a suitable heading for the remaining 6 paragraphs. Write your answers A-I, in the spaces numbered 15-20 on the answer sheet.

There are more headings than paragraphs, so you will not use all the headings.

-
List of headings

- A THE GYRE PRINCIPLE
- B THE GREENHOUSE EFFECT
- C HOW OCEAN WATERS MOVE
- D STATISTICAL EVIDENCE
- E THE ADVECTION PRINCIPLE
- F DIFFUSION VERSUS ADVECTION
- G FIGURING THE SEA LEVEL CHANGES
- H ESTIMATED FIGURES
- I THE DIFFUSION MODEL

-
-
-
List of Paragraphs

- 15. Paragraph 2 _____
- 16. Paragraph 3 _____
- 17. Paragraph 4 _____
- 18. Paragraph 5 _____
- 19. Paragraph 6 _____
- 20. Paragraph 7 _____

Answers

- 15. H
- 16. D
- 17. F
- 18. E

19. A

20. C

Questions 21 and 22 COMPLETING SENTENCES

Answer questions 21 and 22 by selecting the correct answer to complete each sentence according to the information given in the reading passage. Write your answers A-D in the spaces numbered 21 and 22 on the answer sheet.

21. Scientists do not know for sure why the air and surface of ocean temperatures are rising because:

- A. there is too much variability
- B. there is not enough variability
- C. they have not been recording these temperatures for enough time
- D. the changes have only been noticed for 100 years

22. New research leads scientists to believe that:

- A. the oceans are less complex
- B. the oceans are more complex
- C. the oceans will rise more than expected
- D. the oceans will rise less than expected

Question 23 COMPLETING NOTES

Look at the following list of factors A-F and select THREE that are mentioned in the reading passage which may contribute to the rising ocean levels. Write the THREE corresponding letters A-F, in the space numbered 23 on the answer sheet.

List of factors

- A. thermal expansion
- B. melting ice
- C. increased air temperature
- D. higher rainfall

- E. changes in the water table
- F. increased ocean movement

Questions 24-28 TRUE or FALSE or NI

Read each of the following statements, 24-28. According to the information in the reading passage if the statement is true, write T, is false, write F and if there was no information about the statement in the reading passage, write NI. Write your answers in the spaces numbered 24-28 on the answer sheet.

- 24. The surface layer of the oceans is warmed by the atmosphere.
- 25. Advection of water changes heat and salt levels.
- 26. A gyre holds less heat than there is in the atmosphere.
- 27. The process of subduction depends on the water density.
- 28. The sea level is expected to rise evenly over the Earth's surface.

Answers

- 21. C
- 22. D
- 23. B, C, E
- 24. NI
- 25. F
- 26. T
- 27. F
- 28. F

READING PASSAGE 3

NEW RULES FOR THE PAPER GAME

Paragraph 1

Computerized data storage and electronic mail were to have heralded the paperless office. But, contrary to expectations, paper consumption throughout the world shows no sign of abating. In fact

consumption, especially of printing and writing papers, continues to increase. World demand for paper and board is now expected to grow faster than the general economic growth in the next 15 years. Strong demand will be underpinned by the growing industrialization of South-East Asia; the re-emergence of paper packaging; greater use of facsimile machines and photocopiers; and the popularity of direct-mail advertising. It is possible that by 2007, world paper and board demand will reach 455 million tons, compared with 241 million tons in 1991.

Paragraph 2

The pulp and paper industry has not been badly affected by the electronic technologies that promised a paperless society. But what has radically altered the industry's structure is pressure from another front—a more environmentally-conscious society, driving an irreversible move toward cleaner industrial production. The environmental consequences of antiquated pulp mill practices and technologies had marked this industry as one in need of reform. Graphic descriptions of *deformed fish and thinning aquatic populations*, particularly in the Baltic Sea where old pulp mills had discharged untreated effluents for 100 years, have disturbed the international community.

Paragraph 3

Until the 1950s, it was common for pulp mills and other industries to discharge untreated effluent into rivers and seas. The environmental effects were at the time either not understood, or regarded as an acceptable cost of economic prosperity in an increasingly import-oriented world economy. But greater environmental awareness has spurred a fundamental change in attitude in the community, in government and in industry itself.

Paragraph 4

Since the early 1980s, most of the world-scale pulp mills in Scandinavia and North America have modernized their operations, outlaying substantial amounts to improve production methods. Changes in mill design and processes have been aimed at minimizing the environmental effects of effluent discharge, while at the same time producing pulp with the whiteness and strength demanded by the international market. The environmental impetus is taking this industry even further, with the focus now on developing processes that may even eliminate waste-water discharges. But the ghost of the old mills continues to haunt the industry today. In Europe, companies face a flood of environment-related legislation. In Germany, companies are now being held responsible for the waste they create.

Paragraph 5

Pulp is the porridge-like mass of plant fibers from which paper is made. Paper makers choose the type of plant fiber and the processing methods, depending on what the end product will be used for: whether it is a sturdy packing box, a smooth sheet of writing paper or a fragile tissue. In wood, which is the source of about 90% of the world's paper production, fibers are bound together by lignin, which gives the unbleached pulp a brown color. The pulping stage separates the wood into fibers so they are suitable for paper making. Pulping can be done by mechanical grinding, or by chemical treatment in which woodchips are 'cooked' with chemicals, or by a combination of both methods.

Paragraph 6

Kraft pulping is the most widely used chemical process for producing pulp with the strength required by the high-quality paper market. It is now usually carried out in a continuous process in a large vessel called a digester. Woodchips are fed from a pile into the top of the digester. In the digester, the chips are cooked in a solution called white liquor, smelling of caustic soda (sodium hydroxide) and sodium sulfide. The chips are cooked at high temperatures of up to 1700 degrees for up to three hours. The pulp is then washed and raked from the spent cooking liquor, which has turned dark and is now appropriately called 'black liquor'. An important feature of Kraft pulping is a chemical recovery system which recycles about 95% of the cooking chemicals and produces more than enough energy to run the mill. In a series of steps involving a furnace and tanks, some of the black liquor is transformed into energy, while some is regenerated into the original white cooking liquor. The recovery system is an integral part of production in the pulp and paper industry. The pulp that comes out has little lignin left in the fibers. Bleaching removes the last remaining lignin and brightens the pulp. Most modern mills have modified their pulping processes to remove as much of the lignin as possible before the pulp moves to the bleaching stage.



QUESTIONS

Questions 29-32

IDENTIFICATION OF TEXT

INFORMATION

Below is a list of possible factors, A through G, which will influence the amount of paper being used in future. From the list, choose FOUR factors which are mentioned in Paragraph 1 of the reading

passage. Write your answers A - G, in the spaces numbered 29-32 on the answer sheet.

List of factors

- A. more people read newspapers
- B. increased use of paper bags
- C. increased book production for education
- D. wider use of sign post advertising
- E. increased use of fax machines
- F. wider use of leaflet advertising
- G. greater use of duplicating machines

-

Questions 33-35 COMPLETING A SUMMARY

The following THREE statements are summaries of Paragraphs 2, 3 and 4 respectively. However, they are incomplete. Complete each of the statements using NO MORE THAN THREE WORDS FROM THE TEXT. Write your answers in the spaces numbered 33-35 on the answer sheet.

- 33. The international community has begun to demand.....
- 34. In the past, the environmental effects of pulp mill practices were probably a price to pay for.....
- 35. Some paper mills have recently modernized their mill design in order to decrease.....

Questions 36-40 IDENTIFICATION OF INFORMATION

Below is a list of possible steps in the Kraft process of turning wood chips into paper. They are numbered 1-8. Only FIVE of the steps listed below are mentioned in the passage. The steps are not listed in the correct order. Decide which steps are mentioned and write them in the correct order. Write the appropriate number for each step in the correct order in the spaces numbered 36-40 on the answer sheet.

- 1. the chips are cooked
- 2. the fibers are bound by lignin
- 3. the pulp is bleached
- 4. woodchips are put into a pile
- 5. the pulp is dried
- 6. the pulp is removed from the black liquor

7. the chips are put into the white liquor

8. the pulp is washed

Answers

(Answers 29 through 32 can be given in any order)

29. B

30. E

31. F

32. G

33. cleaner industrial production

34. economic prosperity

35. environmental effects

36. 4

37. 7

38. 1

39. 8

40. 6

7.4 WRITING

There are two sections on the writing task. On the first task you are asked to describe a graph, a pie chart, a table, a diagram or a process. You have to make a written report based on the information presented to you. Make your written report objectively based on the given information. Your opinion is not needed on this kind of task. Focus only on the information and describe the graphs, pie charts or diagrams the way you see them. When describing graphs make sure you describe the trends on each graph and draw your conclusion based on the trends presented on the graph. When making reports on pie charts and tables you should know when to compare and when to contrast to make a detailed report. When writing a report about a process or diagram you need to make sure you describe the different stages about the process or the diagram.

The main strategy in writing task one is to describe what you see based on the given information only and you are not being asked to state any opinion. Make sure you stick to these rules and you will be right on track.

The second task on the writing test which carries more weight is where you need to express your own opinions. Before writing your written essay be sure to understand what is being asked for or what kind of essay you need to write; whether you are asked to write a written argument or you are asked to describe a certain activity. Make sure you are able to answer the questions given as well as supporting them with relevant evidences. The basic thing you should remember in doing the writing tasks is to make sure you meet the number of words required or you will get a lesser score if this is not met.

***The WRITING component is comprised of 2 writing assignments:
one report of 150 words based on a graphic; and one essay of 250
words based on a prompting question or statement.
TIME: 60 minutes***

TIPS FOR TAKING THE WRITING TEST

The writing part of the IELTS lasts for one hour and is comprised of two separate tasks. In the first task, you will be asked to examine a graphic question and compose a 150-word report that explains the information given. The graphic question might be any of the following:

- Ø a line graph
- Ø a bar graph
- Ø a pie chart
- Ø a table
- Ø a diagram

You will have 20 minutes to write your report.

In the second task, you will be given a topic to write about in a 250-word essay. The subject matter is usually of general interest and you may have to

- Ø give and justify your opinion
- Ø give a possible solution to a problem
- Ø compare differing ideas or viewpoints

You will have 40 minutes to write your essay.

Remember to monitor your use of time carefully since the second task carries more weight than does your first task.

*Neatness counts. Illegible
writing reduces your score.*

In Task 1, you may be given either a single line graph; a double line graph; a horizontal or vertical bar graph; a pie chart; a table; or a diagram of a process, such as a flow chart. You should spend no more than 20 minutes interpreting and reporting on the information given by the graphic. Your objective is to convert the visual data into a 150-word description.



What is the examiner looking for?

- Ø The effectiveness of your word choices: Are you choosing words that adequately describe the information that the graphic is showing? Does your vocabulary capture the movement, trends, percentages and steps that may be depicted?
-
- Ø The objectivity of your writing: Are your explanations and descriptions free of your own personal opinion? Does your report allow the reader to form his or her own opinion of the information?
-

Before you take the test

STRATEGY

Practice examining a variety of graphics and ask yourself the following types of questions:

- Ø What is this graph about?
- Ø What are the parts of the graph?
- Ø Are different things being compared?
- Ø Is the information being presented in chronological order?
- Ø Is there movement being expressed in the graphic?
- Ø If so, are the trends up or down?
- Ø Is the information being divided into parts?

SAMPLE GRAPHICS

Line graphs compare two variables: one is plotted along the x-axis (horizontal) and the other along the y-axis (vertical). The y-axis in a line graph usually indicates quantity (e.g., dollars, gallons) or percentage, while the horizontal x-axis often measures units of time. As a result, the line graph is often viewed as a time series graph. For example, if you wanted to graph the height of a baseball

pitch over time, you could measure the time variable along the x-axis, and the height along the y-axis. Although they do not present specific data as well as tables do, line graphs are able to show relationships more clearly than tables do. Line graphs can also depict multiple series and hence are usually the best candidate for time series data and frequency distribution.

Bar and **column** graphs and line graphs share a similar purpose. The column graph, however, reveals a change in magnitude, whereas the line graph is used to show a change in direction.

In summary, line graphs

- ∅ show specific values of data well
- ∅ reveal trends and relationships between data
- ∅ compare trends in different groups of a variable

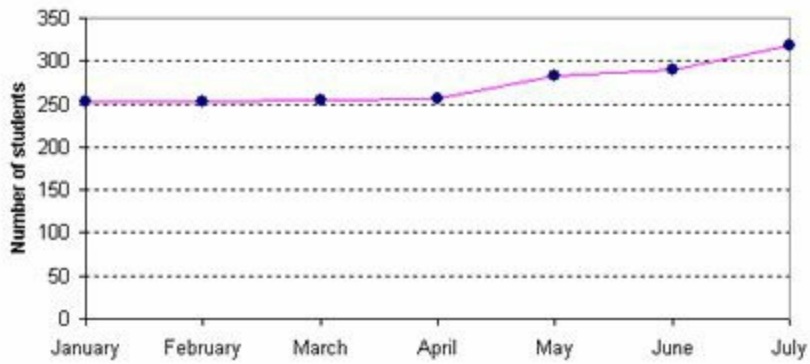
Graphs can give a distorted image of the data. If inconsistent scales on the axes of a line graph force data to appear in a certain way, then a graph can even reveal a trend that is entirely different from the one intended. This means that the intervals between adjacent points along the axis may be dissimilar, or that the same data charted in two graphs using different scales will appear different.

Example 1 – Plotting a trend over time

Figure 1 shows one obvious trend, the fluctuation in the labor force from January to July. The number of students at the local high school who are members of the labor force is scaled using intervals on the y-axis, while the time variable is plotted on the x-axis.

The number of students participating in the labor force was 252 in January, 252 in February, 255 in March, 256 in April, 282 in May, 290 in June and 319 in July. When examined further, the graph indicates that the labor force participation of these students was at a plateau for the first four months covered by the graph (January to April), and for the next three months (May to July) the number increased steadily.

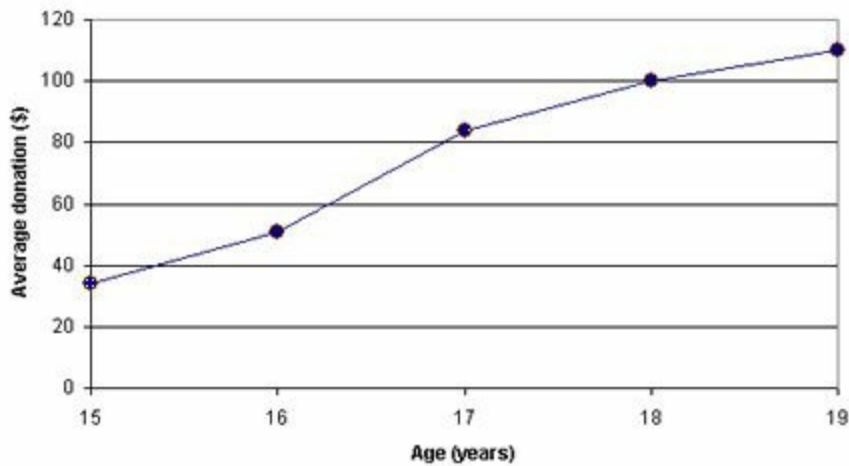
Figure 1. Labour force participation in Andrew's high school



Example 2 – Comparing two related variables

Figure 2 is a single line graph comparing two items; in this instance, time is not a factor. The graph compares the number of dollars donated by the age of the donors. According to the trend in the graph, the older the donor, the more money he or she donates. The 17-year-old donors donate, on average, \$84. For the 19-year-olds, the average donation increased by \$26 to make the average donation of that age group \$110.

Figure 2. Average number of dollars donated at Evergreen High School, by age of donor



Example 3 – Using correct scale

When drawing a line, it is important that you use the correct scale. Otherwise, the line's shape can give readers the wrong impression about the data. Compare Figure 3 with Figure 4:

Figure 3. Number of guilty crime offenders, Grishamville

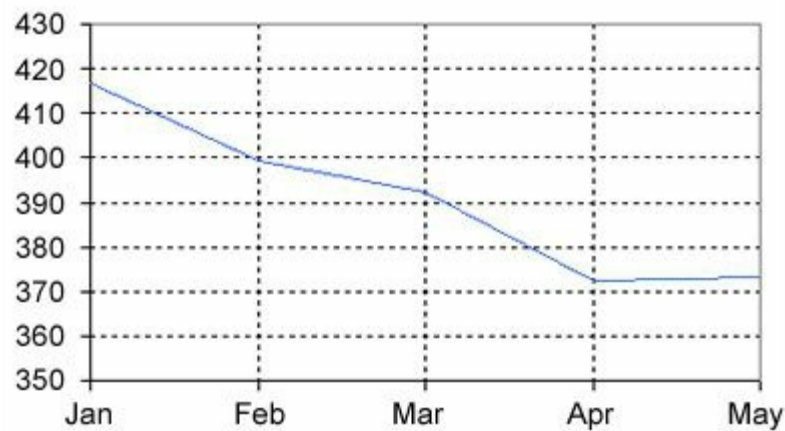
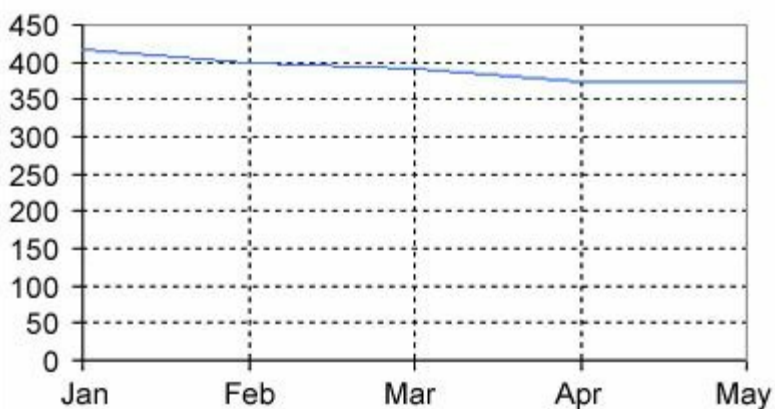


Figure 4. Number of guilty crime offenders, Grishamville



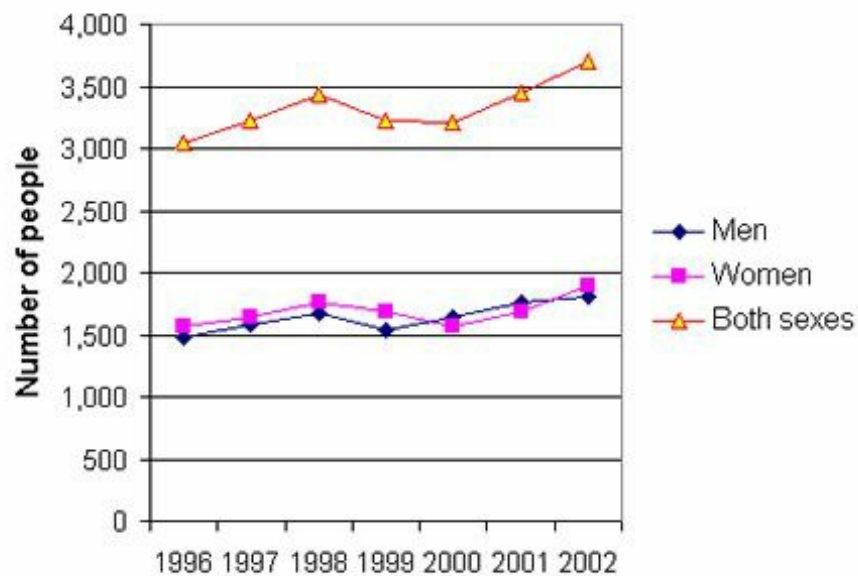
Using a scale of 350 to 430 (Figure 3) focuses on a small range of values. It does not accurately depict the trend in guilty crime offenders between January and May since it exaggerates that trend and does not relate it to the bigger picture. However, choosing a scale of 0 to 450 (Figure 4) better displays how small the decline in the number of guilty crime offenders really was.

Example 4 – Multiple line graphs

A multiple line graph can effectively compare similar items over the same period of time. (See Figure. 5)

Figure 5 is an example of a very good graph. The message is clearly stated in the title, and each of the line graphs is properly labeled. It is easy to see from this graph that the total cell phone use has been rising steadily since 1996, except for a two-year period (1999 and 2000) where the numbers drop slightly. The pattern of use for women and men seems to be quite similar with very small discrepancies between them.

Figure 5. Cell phone use in Anytowne, 1996 to 2002



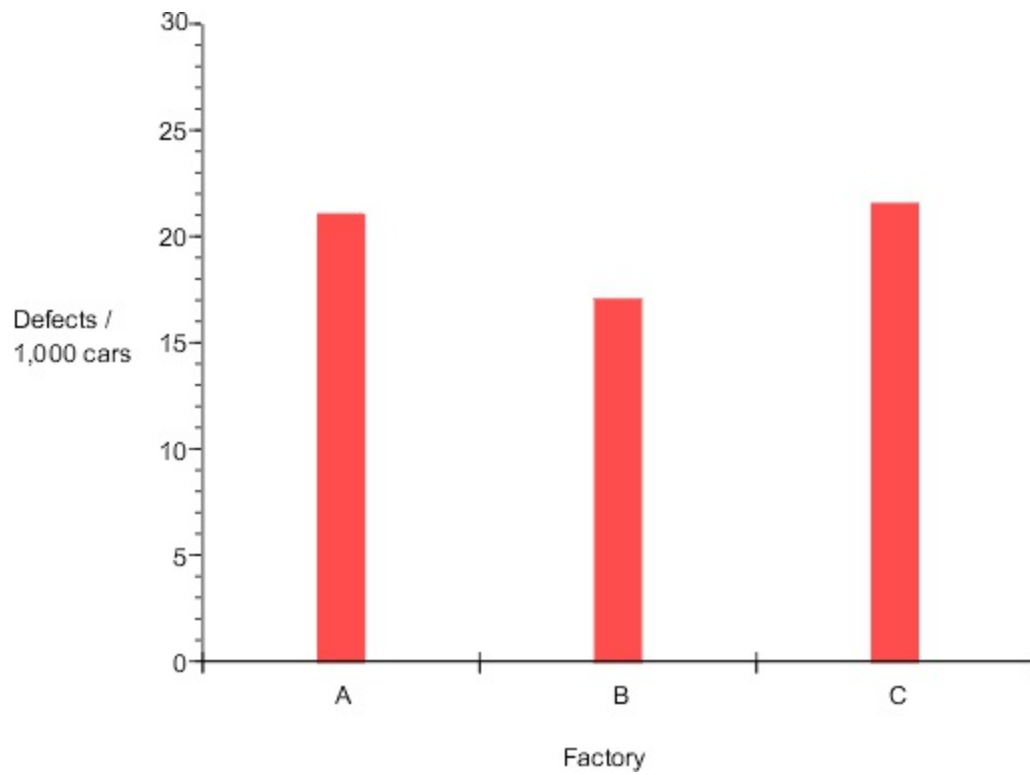
-

Bar graphs are a very common type of graph best suited for a qualitative independent variable. Since there is no uniform distance between levels of a qualitative variable, the discrete nature of the individual bars are well suited for this type of independent variable. Though you can extract trends between bars (e.g., they are gradually getting longer or shorter), you cannot calculate a slope from the heights of the bars.

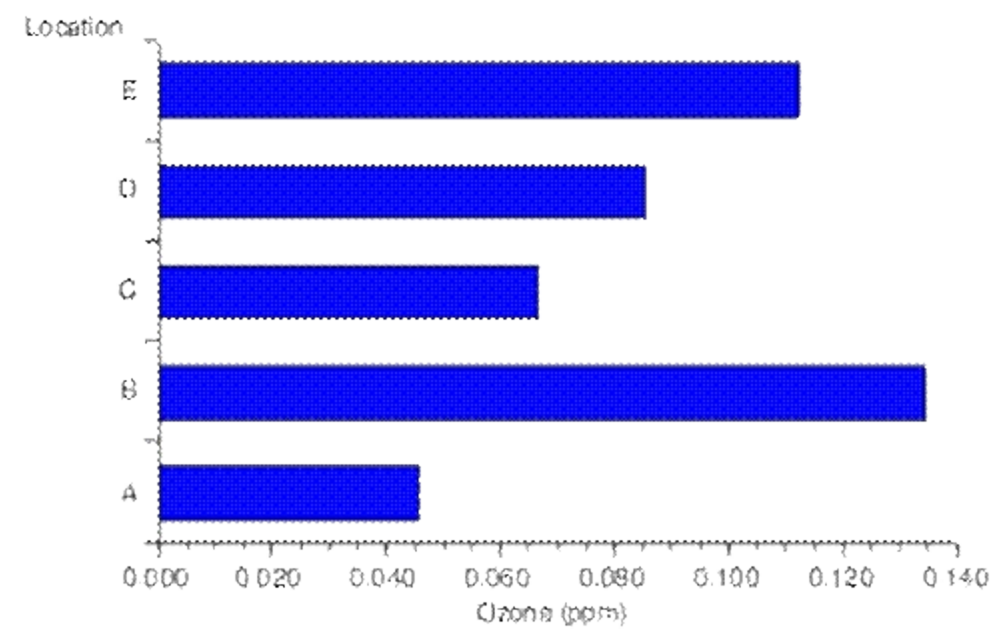
One Independent and One Dependent Variable

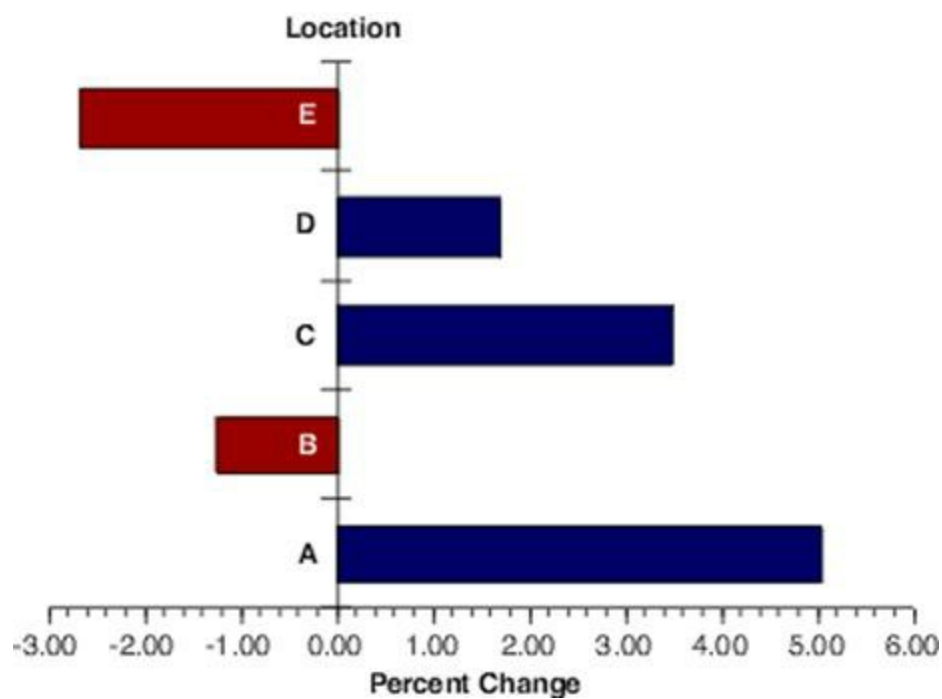
1. Simple Bar Graph

Here the Factory is our independent variable, since there is no unit of measurement for factories and no 'order' to the factories, the independent variable is nominal. The dependent variable is scalar, measured in defects/1,000 cars. Since the scalar dependent variable has a natural zero point (i.e., absolute or ratio), all of the bars are anchored to the horizontal axis, giving a common point of measurement.



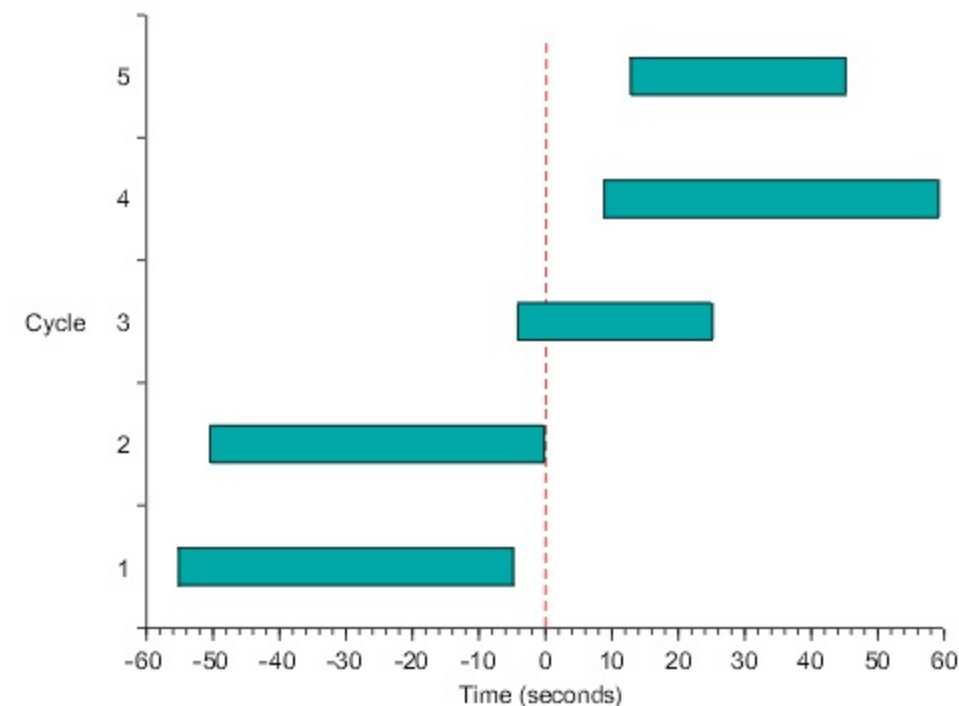
2. Horizontal Bar Graph





Bar graphs can be shown with the dependent variable on the horizontal scale. This type of bar graph is typically referred to as a horizontal bar graph. Otherwise the layout is similar to the vertical bar graph. Note in the example above, that when you have well-defined zero point (ratio and absolute values) and both positive and negative values, you can place your vertical (independent variable) axis at the zero value of the dependent variable scale. The negative and positive bars are clearly differentiated from each other both in terms of the direction they point and their color.

3. Range Bar Graph



HINTS

Each of the tasks is assessed separately by a trained and qualified examiner and given a score. Writing Task 2 is worth more marks than Writing Task 1, so you should be sure to leave plenty of time to complete Writing Task 2. Do not waste time struggling to write your report, simply follow the suggestions given in REPORT WRITING and devote the majority of your energy to perfect the essay in Task 2.

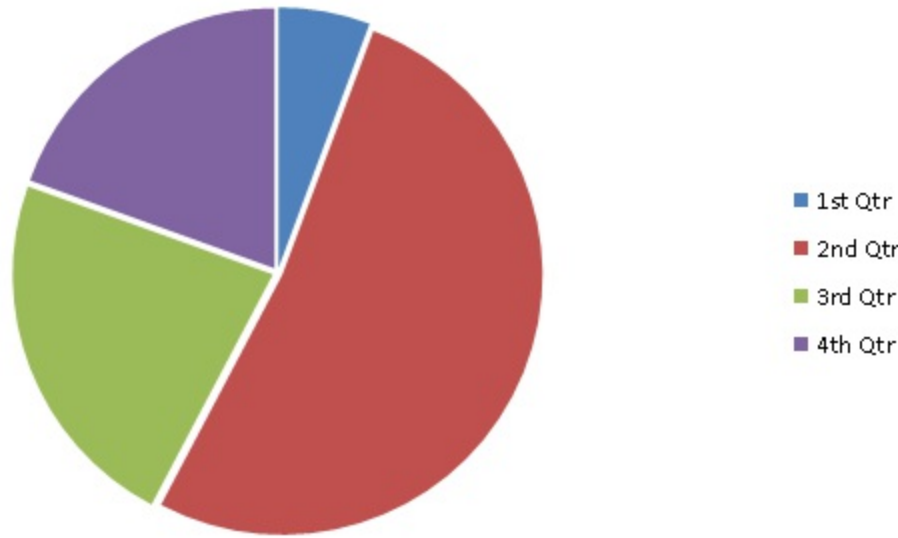
Your primary objective in Task 1 is to factually describe the graphs. You don't need to analyze the data, for example you don't need to give reasons for why figures are high or low. Sometimes, when there is more than 1 graph, there is a relationship between the two and you can bring in some comparison but more than this is not necessary. In the same way, no specialized knowledge of your own is needed or wanted nor your opinions.

Remember the function of many graphs is to describe a trend so be sure that you describe the trends. A trend is how values change generally over time and it is important to describe the changes along with some of the individual values.

One important issue with the Writing Task 1 is how much detail to include in your report. This depends really on how much detail there is in the question. If there is only one graph and it doesn't have much numerical data in it, then you will be expected to include all or nearly all of the numerical detail. If, however, you have two graphs, both of which are very complicated with lots of values, you will not be expected to include everything as you only have 150 words to do the job. What you will have to do is to include a selection of what you feel is the most important and significant detail that needs to be included to accurately describe the graph.

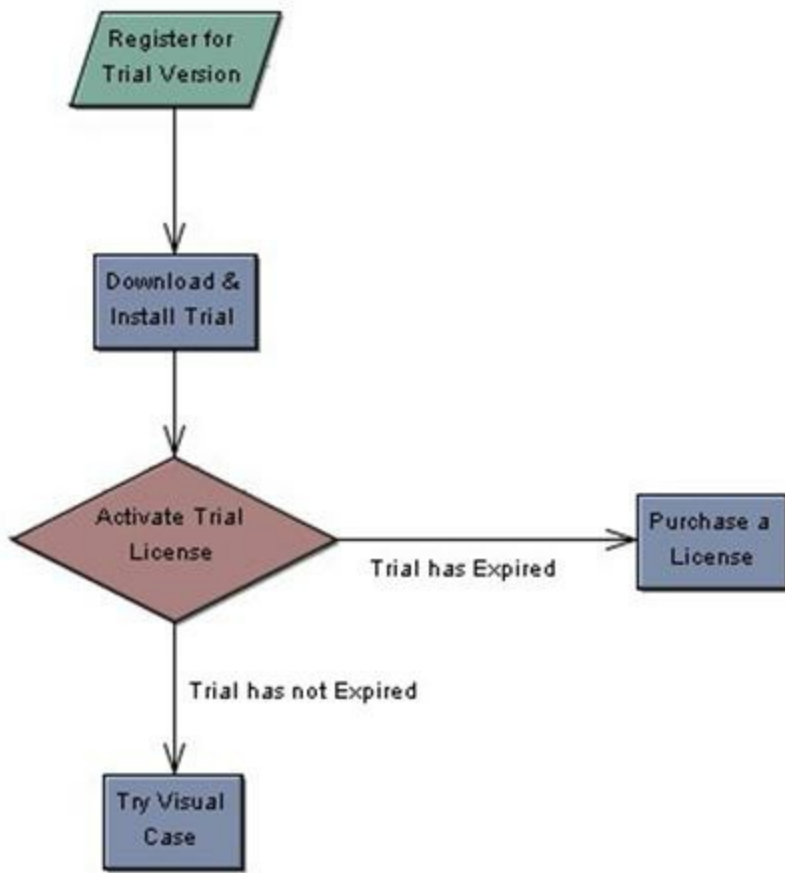
4. Pie Graph

Sales



The above pie graph is divided using colors to represent each sales quarter. Given that the second quarter (in red) appears to comprise 50% of the pie, you can make the reasonable assumption that the third quarter (in green) comprises 25% of the year's sales and the first and fourth quarters (in blue and purple respectively) total 25% between them. You can not only make objective statements about the composition of the pie itself, but also suggest reasons for the distribution over the course of the year.

5. Flow Chart



The above flow chart is a diagram that shows a process. Beginning at the top, you can follow the arrows to complete a multi-step process. Read the text within the shapes to identify what type of process is being explained. When there is more than one option, that is, the arrows go in two directions; this signifies that a choice can be made at that junction. Be sure that your objective statements include steps that have more than one option.

6. Table

hydrogen 1 H																							helium 2 He
lithium 3 Li	beryllium 4 Be																						neon 10 Ne
sodium 11 Na	magnesium 12 Mg																						argon 18 Ar
potassium 19 K	calcium 20 Ca																						krypton 36 Kr
rubidium 37 Rb	strontium 38 Sr																						xenon 54 Xe
cesium 55 Cs	barium 56 Ba	lanthanide series 57-70 *																					radon 86 Rn
francium 87 Fr	radium 88 Ra	actinide series 89-102 **																					

scandium 21 Sc	titanium 22 Ti	vanadium 23 V	chromium 24 Cr	manganese 25 Mn	iron 26 Fe	cobalt 27 Co	nickel 28 Ni	copper 29 Cu	zinc 30 Zn	gallium 31 Ga	germanium 32 Ge	arsenic 33 As	selenium 34 Se	bromine 35 Br	krypton 36 Kr
ytrium 39 Y	zirconium 40 Zr	niobium 41 Nb	molybdenum 42 Mo	technetium 43 Tc	ruthenium 44 Ru	rhodium 45 Rh	palladium 46 Pd	silver 47 Ag	cadmium 48 Cd	indium 49 In	tin 50 Sn	antimony 51 Sb	tellurium 52 Te	iodine 53 I	xenon 54 Xe
lutetium 71 Lu	hafnium 72 Hf	tantalum 73 Ta	tungsten 74 W	rhenium 75 Re	osmium 76 Os	iridium 77 Ir	platinum 78 Pt	gold 79 Au	mercury 80 Hg	thallium 81 Tl	lead 82 Pb	bismuth 83 Bi	polonium 84 Po	astatine 85 At	radon 86 Rn

* Lanthanide series

lanthanum 57 La	cerium 58 Ce	praseodymium 59 Pr	neodymium 60 Nd	promethium 61 Pm	samarium 62 Sm	europium 63 Eu	gadolinium 64 Gd	terbium 65 Tb	dysprosium 66 Dy	holmium 67 Ho	erbium 68 Er	thulium 69 Tm	ytterbium 70 Yb
actinium 89 Ac	thorium 90 Th	protactinium 91 Pa	uranium 92 U	neptunium 93 Np	plutonium 94 Pu	americium 95 Am	curium 96 Cm	berkelium 97 Bk	californium 98 Cf	einsteinium 99 Es	fermium 100 Fm	mendelevium 101 Md	nobelium 102 No

** Actinide series

The above graphic is the Periodic Table. In it are the names and symbols for all the chemical elements. Objective statements can be made about the numbering of the elements, as well as the particular initials used to represent them.

When you take the test



Check your report for the following:

- Ø Does your report have the proper structure?
It should have an introduction, body and conclusion. Each paragraph should transition into the next using words that connect.
- Ø Does your report use objective vocabulary that is appropriate for the type of graphic being described?
It should use words that simply communicate the facts, not your opinion of the particular graphic or the subject matter being displayed.

Ø Does your report adhere to the task specifications?

It should be as close to 150 words as possible and be written legibly. It should be detailed enough to explain to the reader the contents, movement and any trends that are apparent.

REPORT WRITING

When writing a Task 1 report, include:

- Ø introductory sentence
- Ø body paragraphs (1-3)
- Ø concluding sentence (optional)

Introductory sentence

The introductory sentence explains what you are describing, for example:

‘The table compares the population growth and interstate migration in each Australian state for 12 months to the end of 1994.’

‘The graph shows the growth of computers in Australia between 1975 and 1995.’

‘The pie chart represents the proportion of gases contained in natural gas.’

Body paragraphs

When discussing the data presented in the task, identify significant trends and give examples that relate directly to the given information to support your statements. If you are explaining a process or an object and how it works, you need to group your information so that it follows a definite logical order.

Remember that the use of verbs expressed in the present passive voice is often appropriate when giving a description of a process or procedure, for example:

‘Coffee beans are pulped to remove their casing. They are then soaked in water, rinsed thoroughly and dried. After the beans are sorted, they are roasted in a kiln and blended. Next, they are packed

and dispatched to shops and supermarkets.'

Concluding sentence (optional)

A simple concluding statement could include any of the following, where relevant:

- significant comments
- a potential solution
- an overall summary of the ideas
- future implications.

In Task 2, you will be given a discussion topic on which you must write a 250-word essay. You will have 40 minutes to complete this task. You should use your knowledge and experience to justify and support your position on the topic, using descriptive and effective language.



What is the examiner looking for?

- Ø Arguments, Ideas and Evidence: These are the three elements that make up your content. The argument is how you present your case as it relates to your topic. The ideas part is how many and how good are your ideas in helping your argument. The evidence is the facts that you use to back up your ideas. Evidence is important in Task 2. Bring in facts from your own experience to support your ideas.
- Ø Communication Quality and Style: This is how clear you are in explaining yourself and whether or not the reader is able to understand your ideas.
- Ø Vocabulary and Sentence Structure: This area is all about your word choices and grammar. You will be evaluated on whether the right grammar and words are used and whether they are used at the right time, in the right place and in the right way. Although most writers are concerned about their grammar, on this test, it counts for only one half of one of the three marking criteria.

Before you take the test

STRATEGY

1. Practice timed writing on a variety of test-relevant topics to improve your construction as well as your sensitivity to time constraints. Sample topics will follow.
2. Practice writing using a parts formula. It is important to plan what you want to express with a writing skeleton and then fill in with your evidence and ideas.

EXAMPLE:

Topic

Paragraph 1	Introduction and explanation of the topic
Paragraph 2	Supporting Idea 1 + Evidence
Paragraph 3	Supporting Idea 2 + Evidence
Paragraph 4	Supporting Idea 3 + Evidence
Paragraph 5	Conclusion

Sample Topics for Task 2

-
Do you think it is right for rich countries to pollute the environment and simply pay penalties as punishment?

Do you believe that men and women are equal?

Do you think that people should have the right to have a gun in their house?

Do you think it is important to preserve local languages and dialects?

Parents should limit children's time for watching TV and playing computer games. Do you agree or disagree?

What should governments do about smoking-related diseases?

Do you think advertising encourages people to buy things that they don't want or need?

Young people should travel or work for one year after high school and before university studies. What are the advantages and disadvantages of this?

Education is often considered something for youth. Some people, however, consider it a lifelong task. What is your opinion?

Some argue that governments should spend money only on medicine and education, rather than on theaters and sports stadiums. Do agree or disagree?

MORE Sample Writing Topics for Task 2

Do you think that the cost of meat is more important than animal welfare?

Do you think that people from certain ethnic backgrounds should be given greater access to education?

Do you agree with capital punishment?

Because of developments in communication and transportation, countries are becoming more and more alike. How is your country becoming more similar to other places in the world?

Do you believe that governments should censor the Internet?

What rights do you believe children should have in every country?

Every generation of people is different in important ways. How is your generation different from your parents' generation?

When you take the test



STRATEGY

Begin your essay writing with one to two minutes of planning. On a scrap piece of paper, brainstorm all of the ideas that come to mind regarding the topic you were given. You may not use all of these, but doing so will limber up your mind and prepare it for the writing exercise. It is best to write a draft first and then copy it again in your neatest handwriting.

THE INTRODUCTION

Do not repeat any part of the question in your introduction. The question is not in your own words therefore they will be disregarded by the examiner and deducted from the word count. You can use individual words but be careful of using large pieces of the question text.

Your introduction should first say what you understand by the question or topic. Then give the main issue or issues that you intend to bring into your answer. Don't give any details --- save that for your body paragraphs.

Sometimes the question or topic asks you to take a position or state your opinion. There is no right or wrong answer for your views; it is how you explain and develop your position throughout the essay that counts.

THE BODY

You have only 40 minutes to execute this task, so it is wise to aim for a body containing 3 or 4 paragraphs. The body must contain certain things. First, you need to examine all parts of the question or topic. Remember there is often more than one question embedded in the topic. Not only should you be sure to examine all parts of the topic, but also all sides. If it is an opinion-based question where there are obvious pros and cons, be certain that you acknowledge both sides. You must choose one side to defend, but always note the opposing viewpoint.

Evidence is very important in supporting your position or explaining your opinion. For every idea that you present, you should have a corresponding example --- whether it is evidence from your own personal experience or from your country's news or from history.

THE CONCLUSION

This does not need to be a long paragraph. You simply need to sum up your points providing a final perspective on your topic. All the conclusion needs is three or four strong sentences which do not need to follow any set formula. Simply review the main points and briefly describe your feelings about the topic --- this provides answers to all parts of the question. A well-selected quote or anecdote can end your essay in a meaningful way.

USEFUL EXPRESSIONS

1. It may indeed be true to say that... (statement from the question); what, however, are the factors involved?
2. It may indeed be the case that... (statement from the question); this subject, however, requires further analysis.
3. ...Noun.... has/have been....verb+ing for many years now. Has this had generally beneficial effects, or have they been largely negative?
E.g. Governments have been sending criminals to prison etc.....
4. You can also use a passive structure:
Noun has/have been + past participle for many years now. Has this had generally beneficial effects, or have they been largely negative?
E.g. Criminals have been sent to prison etc....
5. At first sight, noun/verb+ing appear/appears to be entirely positive/beneficial. However further analysis reveals drawbacks to this way of thinking.
6. When all is said and done, there are no clear solutions to this problem and it is for governments/ individuals/ the public/ students/etc, to weigh both sides of the case and come to their own conclusions.
7. Noun/verb+ing is one of the most controversial issues of our times. What are the arguments that need to be considered?
8. Noun/Verb+ing, as is the case with many issues, has both negative and positive aspects.
9. On balance, it is my own personal view that the advantages of noun/verb+ing far/heavily/slightly outweigh the disadvantages.
10. Over recent years, attitudes to noun/verb+ing have changed considerably. What are the reasons for this change and what are the implications for the future?
11. Noun/verb+ing has/have been an important part of many cultures/Western cultures/ developing countries/ school-life/ working life/etc. for many years now. What are the reasons for this and what

changes are likely or possible in the future?

-

SAMPLE ESSAY COMPONENTS

- Ø It may indeed be true to say that (statement from the question); however, what are the factors involved?

Beginning - this would be a good first sentence for your Task 2, for example: *It may indeed be true to say that youth crime and drug abuse is rising; however, what are the factors involved?*

- Ø It may indeed be the case that (statement from the question); this subject, however, requires further analysis.

Beginning- this would be a good first sentence for your Task 2.

- Ø ...Noun....has/have beenverb+ing for many years now. Has this had generally beneficial effects, or have they been largely negative?

Beginning - this would be a good first sentence for your Task 2. It is suitable for any Task 2 questions asking you to discuss advantages and disadvantages. It is also useful in questions that ask "To what extent do you agree?" This means- how much do you agree?

Middle - to start the next paragraph about disadvantages.

- Ø When all is said and done, there are no clear solutions to this problem and it is for governments/ individuals/ the public/ students/etc. to weigh both sides of the case and come to their own conclusions.

End - a useful general conclusion.

"weigh " means "consider carefully"

- Ø Noun/verb+ing is one of the most controversial issues of our times. What are the arguments that need to be considered?

Beginning - this would be a good first sentence for your Task 2.

- Ø Noun/Verb+ing, as is the case with many issues, has both negative and positive aspects.

Beginning – this would be a good first sentence for your Task 2. It is suitable for any Task 2 questions asking you to discuss advantages and disadvantages.

- Ø On balance, it is my own personal view that the advantages of noun/verb+ing far/heavily /slightly outweigh the disadvantages.

End - a useful general conclusion for advantages/ disadvantages Task 2 questions.

- Ø Over recent years, attitudes on noun/verb+ing have changed considerably. What are the reasons for this change, and what are the implications for the future?

Beginning - this would be a good first sentence for your Task 2. It is suitable for any Task 2 questions asking you to discuss changes and the future results of those changes.

Ø Noun/verb+ing has/have been an important part of many cultures/Western cultures/developing countries/school-life/working life/etc. for many years now. What are the reasons for this, and what changes are likely or possible in the future?

Beginning - this would be a good first sentence for your Task 2. It is suitable for any Task 2 questions asking you to discuss present situations/issues and possible future changes.

8. The Winning approach

- *So now that you know which books/course material to use and how to train, what exactly should you do and in what order?*
- *What kind of schedule should I use? In what order should I go through the material?*

The key to good test preparation is to start early, study and do practice tests consistently over an extended period of time. It is the same as training for a marathon—the earlier you begin, the stronger your base will be. A realistic training period for a marathon is six months. Luckily for you, you don't have to train six months in advance. I would recommend anywhere from three to six months for you to prepare for the IELTS. And if you are even more pressed for time, you can 'accelerate' your training by focusing on the areas of weakness first (more on this later).

There is no specific time when you want to do your practice tests for IELTS. The best time you should take a practice test is when you have nothing else to do. It is not advisable to take practice tests when you have other tasks in your mind. It will take off your concentration when doing your practice test.

A relaxed mind and a quiet environment are most helpful when taking your practice tests. It is advisable to do your practice tests early in the morning when your mind is still fresh from a good night's sleep and the atmosphere during this time is very quiet allowing you to concentrate on what you are doing.

You can do at least one practice test a day. Do not stress out yourself in doing more. It will become too stressful for you. Distribute your time for each of the IELTS components within the day. This will help you freshen out your brain and relieves you of the test pressure.

You can do one stretch of taking the practice test just like the way you will be taking it during the exams once a week. Get a partner whenever you are doing an overall practice of the IELTS exam. This is most helpful especially during the speaking practice. It is also one way of discussing your mistakes and evaluating your written practice tests.

There is no particular order on how you should go over your IELTS preparation book. The first thing you should do is to know your strength and weakness. You can do this by randomly picking up a

practice test from your IELTS book. Do the whole exam except for the speaking test. Choose your best free time when doing this random practice test. After taking your practice test check your answers. Results on this random practice test will determine your strengths and weakness. Knowing these you can give more time practicing where you fall short to improve yourself.

Read on the strategies and tips on how you should answer a particular question during your free time and keep them in mind. Whenever you take your practice tests apply what you have read and see how it works for you.

What kind of schedule should I use?

-

Well, that would all depend on how much time you have on your hand, right? Take a calendar, circle your test date, circle today—which is your start date for test prep. Then count the weeks (or days) you have to work with. The only effective schedule is the one that you will use consistently. Since everyone has different biorhythms and different study habits, you have to be honest with yourself. You may decide what works best for you is 4 hours every Saturday morning at the local library. Or maybe an hour each day over the course of 4 days would be more sustainable. Or maybe you need to study 2 hours per day every day. Basically, ask yourself, how much are you willing to do?

Before you think you have to study longer and harder to reap all the benefits, I would rather say you study wiser. Studying wiser means studying more efficiently, thus saving you time in the long run. Again, this all comes back to focusing on the areas of weakness.

How is studying your area of weakness a better strategy?

That's right—focus on your area of weakness. Too often, people waste time by doing practice problems on the sections of the tests that cover their strengths. So, ideally, the very first time you do a full-length practice test, set aside an hour, two or three and do one practice test for each section. Set up a mock testing situation — time yourself and make sure you are free from all distractions. If you think you can't do it, have a friend or family member 'proctor' the test to keep you on track.

Why go through this trouble? Because when you score yourself on the practice test afterwards, you can immediately see which your area of weakness is. This may or may not be a surprise to you. In my case, even though I never liked speaking, I tended to score highly in the speaking section — at least high enough to know that I needed to focus on the other sections. There's no advantage for me to study harder to get a higher score in speaking if I already have an adequate score to pass it without studying any further. However, studying harder to bone up my writing, reading, and listening sections might very well become the difference between a great score and an average score. This section also answers that inevitable question of “What order or which sections should I study first?” *Study your areas of weakness first.*

What if you pass the practice test with flying colors? If you are one of those people who score passing in all sections with a wide margin to spare, you may only need to do one or two more practice tests. If you can replicate the same stellar results each time, then it's okay to put down the pencil and congratulate yourself with a pat on the back. More practice tests can't hurt and may give you a boost of self-confidence, which one certainly can't argue with having. If your scores indicate you have one or more sections you need to work on, then follow the advice above and strategize your study plan.

8.1 Time Management

John recounts his experience at his first attempt.

‘The first time I studied for the IELTS, I did not practice any ‘timing’ discipline in doing the questions. Then, on my first IELTS, I panicked and ran out of time. The IELTS is not only about knowing the concepts and doing the questions, but doing them in less than two minutes each, on average.’

- John (IELTS: 7.5 at second attempt)

Time can be perhaps your biggest adversary on the IELTS. With the average time per question being a little more than one minute, and the fact that the sometimes you need to recheck the answers, it is quite usual to find yourself in a time problem half way through the test.

The typical IELTS winner uses the following techniques.

Ø Absolute mastery over at least some areas of the exam.

Here is where the importance of not ignoring your strong areas comes in. You can easily do these questions in a minute and save time to be spent on areas you are not strong in.

Ø Sticking to time limits while practising.

This will give you a good idea of what to expect at the actual test.

Ø The following timing strategy has been found useful by quite a few high scorers.

When you practice full-length tests or section tests, after every fifth Question, make a note of the time taken. Keep doing this until you reach the end of the test.

This will help you in:

Ø Pacing yourself, so that you know when to speed up or when you can slow down.

Ø Identifying the type of questions that you spend the maximum time on, so that you can practice more.

Ø A sense of control and thereby greater confidence.

8.2 Do IELTS Winners work in groups?

Well, while it does make sense to stay in touch with other people taking the IELTS, studying in a group has its own problems.

You first need to find someone at a similar level to yourself; otherwise, you might be doing the highest difficulty problems, whereas your partner would be busy refreshing his/her fundamentals.

Then you need to make sure that your partner's commitment is as high as your own.

The best study partner would be someone who can complement you, i.e., his weaknesses should match your strengths and vice versa.

Otherwise, it just ends up being a waste of time.

8.3 Why the winners ignore selected ‘Difficult’ Problems

*As a final point, I would like to say what I find the most important thing about IELTS is **CONCENTRATION** and **mental preparation**. Don't make the mistake of going too deeply into tough-questions-that-even-their-authors-can't-solve and forsaking your mental preparation. When you feel you're ready, just go there, do your best and move on. Good concentration and successful alleviation of nervousness can make more difference than months of preparation, especially if you are aiming high.*

- Jeet (IELTS: 8)

There is a lot of material available in the market and some of the more ambitious students end up studying material that is way beyond the IELTS level.

Also some of the regular ‘Tough’ books give highly convoluted questions. Some of these are simply beyond the scope of the IELTS.

If you come across any such problems, the best rule of thumb is to compare it with the Official questions and ignore them if they seem too much out of league.

The idea is **not** to become an Expert in Writing or Speaking, but to focus on areas and syllabus that the IELTS tests.

8.4 Why you should read the Newspapers

One of the most consistent traits of IELTS winners is that they are voracious readers. In fact while doing your studies, you will need to read reams of paper and absorb a great amount of information in a short time.

Being able to read faster is a quality that will not only be highly beneficial for the IELTS but also life beyond it.

If you can read a four-line question and the five answer choices in 10 seconds less than the average Joe, this will give you an immense advantage.

One of the best ways to improve your reading speed is to actually read a lot!!

Reading the newspapers/journals will not only help you in improving your reading speed but will also familiarise you with the issues of the day and make your writing & speaking weightier.

8.5 How to find out your future IELTS score without taking the IELTS

The official tests are the most reliable indicator of your actual IELTS score, as these tests consist of real ‘retired’ questions.

Of course it is advised to take the test only after you have done your study rounds, preferably a few days before the actual IELTS.

8.6 When Shortcuts/Educated Guesses are important

While such creatures do exist, there are not many who have not taken a single guess at the IELTS.

After you have done your first round of studies, you should be aware of what the possibilities of taking an educated guess are.

Sooner or later, you will need to take an educated Guess in the IELTS.

That said, it is well not to focus on too many shortcuts since that can muddle up your mind as the experiences of Brad and Kathy shows

If you see something crazy...chances are that it is just a pattern recognition type question. You cannot possibly expect to retain all the little bits of facts you've read floating around for these. Give every question a try... as you work them out, these types of questions will click into place. Remember...there are only so many concepts that are covered. As long as you know enough to build on for most of these concepts, you do not need to learn all the "easy-solve" notes. –

Brad (IELTS: 8)

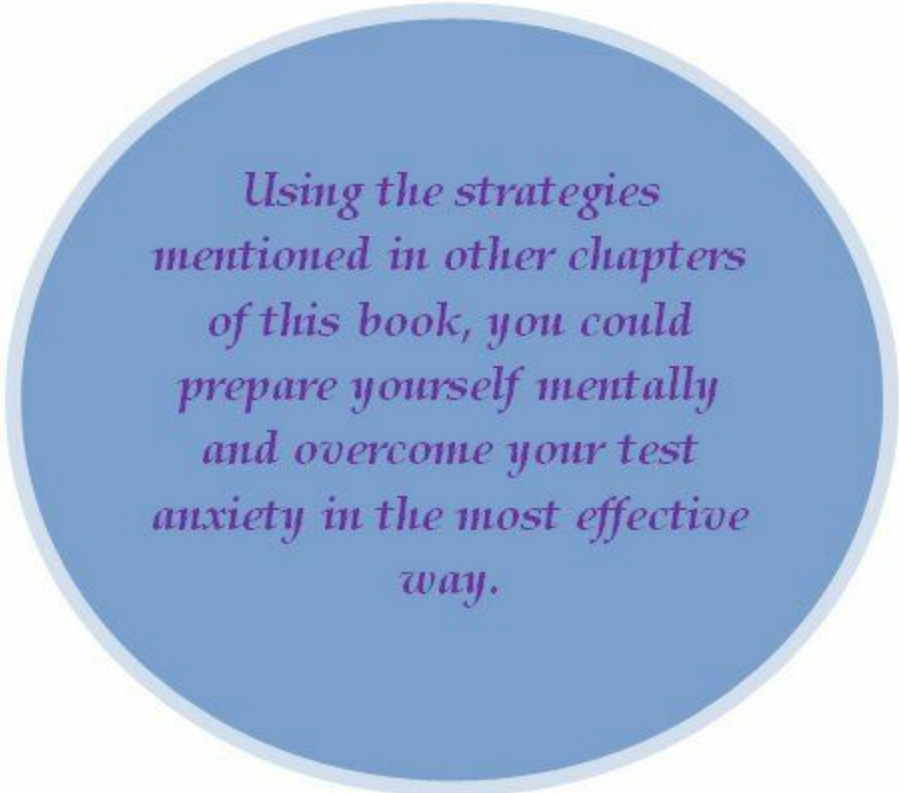
The ingenious tips such as 'guess when unsure', or the super-advanced 'eliminate+guess' can lead you astray - If you're comfortable with time management I advise against guessing - there is enough time, if you've brought your speed up with practice. –

Kathy (IELTS: 7)

8.7 Why Mental Fitness is Key

I cannot overstress the importance of confidence and remaining calm. The absolute worst thing you can do is to panic during the test.

There are innumerable examples of people who have done far worse than they expected and the most common cause is a psychological meltdown during the test.



*Using the strategies
mentioned in other chapters
of this book, you could
prepare yourself mentally
and overcome your test
anxiety in the most effective
way.*

9. How to get ‘Lucky’ in IELTS

I have noticed that students with similar ability sometimes end up with widely different scores on the IELTS. The most common explanation for this is luck.

However, luck is only a part of the story. When you interview the so-called ‘lucky’ applicants, you will always find the following traits.

Ø *That they were well prepared.*

Ø *That they had a backup plan if the result was not as expected.*

Ø *That they had confidence in their abilities to do well.*

Ø *They faced the IELTS as a challenge – a challenge that got their adrenaline flowing, and brought out the best in them.*

Ø *And above all, they had the Winning Mind Set.*

10. The Winning Mind Set



*So what is the
Winning Mind Set?*

Probably the single most important factor is the ‘*Burning Desire to Excel*’...

10.1 Burning Desire to Excel

This is the first and the most important trait of an IELTS Winner. This desire is not Hope, it is not a Wish, but is a deep pulsating desire that transcends everything else.

During a few months preceding the actual Test, the Winners think of nothing but a great IELTS score.

‘Burning your Bridges’* is a path that thousands of successful armies have followed. It is a way of the IELTS winner. If you have ten different ways you could possibly go, your focus will never be single minded. It is best to close your mind to all other alternatives, and focus solely on the IELTS.

**In medieval times, there was a General who had to fight a much powerful enemy. The general knew that if his men had the option to run away they would. He then made his men march forward, and burned the bridge, which would have been their only escape route.*

The men had no option but to fight. They knew it was a do or die situation and they fought with all their heart, eventually winning the battle.

Merely wishing for a great IELTS score will not be enough.

You must have a definite (or nearly definite) score in mind. It is not good enough just to say that ‘I want a high score’. You must talk in terms of 8 or 7.5 or another definite number.

You must then state clearly what you are willing to sacrifice in the short term to gain this score. With so many pressures on our time, it is almost impossible to pursue the desire to be an IELTS winner without sacrificing something, be it time with friends/family, time off work, entertainment..... you name it!

I know of NO person, who has succeeded in the IELTS, who had become an IELTS Winner, without total dedication.

A burning desire with a state of mind such that it becomes an obsession, followed by a well laid out strategy backed by persistence that does not recognize failure, is what can change your 'Luck'.

A pulsating, burning desire has tremendous power. It can surmount the most unfavourable odds and bring success to your feet.

Popular books like 'Success is an Inside Job' and 'Battling the Inside Dummy' are full of case histories of people who have changed their circumstances by the power of their Desire.

Medical history has well documented studies on 'suggestive suicide', wherein people actually killed themselves with the power of their thoughts.

And we all know the stories of people like Washington, Edison, Ford and others who rose from humble beginnings, fought insurmountable odds yet achieved greatness by their dreams and their burning desire to fulfil that dream.

10.2 How Winners overcome limiting beliefs

‘Whether you think you can or you can’t, you are right either way’

Anonymous

We as human being have, within reason, unlimited potential! However we rarely use it. We have been told too many times, ‘This won’t work’, ‘You cannot do it’, or ‘If no one has been able to go from 5 to 8, what makes you think you can’.

This brings to mind the case of the **4-minute mile**.

For decades, in fact for as long as records began, no athlete was able to run a mile in under four minutes. There were several athletes who could consistently do it in 4:03, 4:04 and even 4:01 minutes, but no one could break the four-minute barrier.

It was widely believed that the human body was incapable of enduring the mile in less than four minutes.

Then in 1954, Roger Bannister broke the barrier and covered the distance in less than 4 minutes. In the following month, Australian John Landy bettered the record with a time of 3 minutes 57.9 seconds.

Within 18 months, another 16 athletes beat the 4-minute time.

What does this show? *That the human performance is ONLY limited by the human belief and nothing else.*

The best way to break your limiting beliefs is to start questioning their validity, their basis. This will tell you if they are indeed true or it is a result of negative feedback you have had over the years.

One of the most common limiting beliefs in the IELTS is: ***‘I am a non native English speaker, so it is natural that I will not do well on the IELTS’***. It seems to make sense to **NOT** do well in IELTS if your spoken English is not as good as a native speaker’s.

However, the following facts can easily overcome this belief:

IELTS English is quite different from spoken colloquial English. The Reading section can be beaten by working on your Reading skills and becoming an Active reader. Also, stats indicate that the first generation Americans whose native language is not English, tend to do ‘significantly’ better than other native speakers at the IELTS.

Another commonly held ‘limiting belief’ is: *‘Oh! I am no good in speaking, I can never compete with those ‘Convent Educated lot’, I am bound to score low. Ooh! It is my destiny!’*

The **story of Xin** and how she conquered her math fear within just a few hour spent on a course in math study skills, is illustrative here.

This class was quite helpful, but it was not at all what I expected when I registered. I was originally under the impression that this was going to be a class on math and how to understand it. I was pleasantly surprised to find out that we dove much deeper than this. I not only learned tips on studying and learning techniques, but I also learned about myself and how my mind learns. Prior to taking this course, I thought I was learning disabled in speaking. I thought I would never excel in IELTS. This term has proved me wrong. I have now made my first 100% on a speaking test and I have a “B” average in Listening. The most important thing I learnt was that it wasn’t a learning disability that was holding me back — it was fear! When I released my fear, I found I was actually enjoying it. I am recommending this class to several people.

The next step in overcoming the fear of speaking is that you must realize that the main ingredient in speaking anxiety is the fear of the unknown. You are afraid of speaking because you don’t know how to do it. To overcome this problem, you **must spend time with it**. Perhaps you need to budget your time more carefully, change your priorities or do something to have more time to spend on speaking practice.

The IELTS is not about complicated concepts but the complicated application of simple concepts that are easy to master.

10.3 How Winner's manage their Self Image to succeed

Our beliefs about the external world are closely related to our beliefs about ourselves.

People always act and feel according to the mental picture they have of themselves. If you see yourself as a winner 'in your mind' you will feel like one and sooner rather than later, you will actually become one.

Irrespective of the external circumstances, your behavior is dictated by the environment within you mind.

This is best illustrated by the following:

In a hypnotic experiment, the subject was told he was at the North Pole. The subject actually started shivering even though the room temperature was at high twenties.
--

The human nervous system cannot tell the difference between a real experience and an imagined one. It acts on the impulses it gets from the mind, whether real or imagined.

Professor Prescott Lecky of the University of Columbia conceived of the Personality as a system of consistent ideas. He called this system of Ideas the '**Self-Image**'.

This self Image is our own conception of the 'Type of Person we are'. Most of these ideas about ourselves have been formed as part of our experiences, our successes and failures, and how other people have reacted to us.

Lecky observed that if students had learning disabilities of some form or other, it could be that the subject was inconsistent with their self-image.

Change the system of belief and you change the self-image. Change the self-image and you change the learning process.

This indeed proved to be true when Lecky tested his theory on thousands of students.

One student, who dropped from college because of poor grades, eventually entered Harvard and became a Straight 'A' student.

Another student who had been repeatedly told that he had no aptitude for English went on to win a Literary Prize at college.

The problem with these students was their inadequate self-image. They internalized their past failures. Instead of saying 'I failed the English Test', they concluded 'I am no good at English'. Once their failures were de-linked from their self-image, their grades started to improve dramatically.

Your subject is the IELTS.

If **YOU** tell yourself that you are not amongst the best in the World, your subconscious believes it and you remain there at the below 7 levels.

If you tell yourself that you are no good at Standardized tests because you have never done well in them, you are destined for a mediocre score.

On the other hand **if your self-image is that of a Winner your actions and hence your results will be like those of a Winner.**

Individuals strive to behave in ways that are in keeping with their self-image, no matter how helpful or hurtful to oneself or others.

Thankfully, self-image is not rigid and can be consciously modified. Its development is a continuous process. In the healthy personality there is constant assimilation of new ideas and expulsion of old ideas throughout life.

If you have a burning desire, it is possible to start reinventing relevant parts of your Self Image in weeks or even days.

It is most effective to delve deep and try to find out the experiences that contributed to those parts of the self-image that are preventing you from seeing yourself as an IELTS Winner.

10.4 The Mental Picture Principle

'I never hit a golf shot without having a sharp picture of it in my head. First I 'see' where I want the ball to finish. Then I 'see' it going there, its trajectory and landing. The next 'scene' shows me making the swing that will turn the previous images into reality'.

Jack Nicklaus (Golfer of the Century)

This mental picture principle is not just limited to Golf, or sports for that matter. This is a Universal Principle and an overwhelming majority of Winners from various fields use this principle, either consciously or sub consciously.

I myself applied it before my IELTS exam and continue to successfully apply it in my professional life.

Think clearly **why you want to take the IELTS**.

Create a clear picture in your mind of your **final goal**. Imagine yourself working with students in your chosen college. See yourself receiving that 'best-student' award. Smell the flowers in the room. See the colours on the wall when you get that standing ovation. Savor the joy on your loved one's face when they get the news.

Create a vivid, lifelike image with all the colours, sounds and feelings.

Every day before sleeping and after getting up, spend five minutes thinking about this image. **Act & Feel** as if you are already there. Picture yourself receiving that envelope containing the award letter, hear the sound as you open it, feel the crispness of the letter containing the details, delight in joy as you receive it.

A vivid, clear picture of yourself as a Winner, repeatedly regularly gets into your subconscious mind.

This is Very Powerful.

A burning desire coupled with belief and clear imagination can outwit Mother Nature. A vast majority of IELTS winners behave as if they are winners even before they have taken the test, or even before they have started preparing. They have a clear picture of what they want to do after their IELTS.

After visiting the test centre the week before the D-day, I did a few minutes of visualization each day - just closed my eyes and saw myself sitting at the workstation, doing well, moving confidently through each section, relaxing during breaks, finally getting that 8 score. And on D-day, that's almost exactly how it went down, except that the 8 turned into an 8.5.

-Zia (IELTS: 8.5)

When the attitude is positive we entertain pleasant feelings and constructive images, and see in our mind's eye what we really want to happen. This brings brightness to the eyes, more energy and focus. The whole thing broadcasts good will, happiness and success. Even the health is affected in a beneficial way. We walk tall and the voice is more powerful.

If you cultivate these traits following the guidelines in this book, you will soon start getting 'Lucky'.

In fact this is true not only for IELTS but for any Exam or Interview you might face in life.

Creating these mental images may sound tricky for a person who is not initiated with how the human mind works, but the power of 'Act as if you already have it' has been acknowledged by the likes of Einstein, Henry Ford, Lincoln, and others.

It is not as difficult as you might imagine. Most people do it on a regular basis. What happens when you worry about possible future setbacks? What happens when you think about it deeply? You are overcome by feelings of anxiety, loss, humiliation and sadness. These are the exact same feeling that you would experience if the event actually happened.

Acting as if you have already achieved a great score activates your sub conscious mind. The power of the human mind is so great and mysterious that it can transmute a Burning, all consuming thought, backed by **strong Belief and vivid imagination**, into its physical equivalent.

Any thought that is repeatedly passed on to the sub conscious mind will be accepted as true and the sub conscious mind will proceed to turn that thought into reality by the most suitable means.

The Sub Conscious mind **cannot distinguish between ‘Good’ and ‘Bad’ thoughts**. This is probably what accounts for what people generally call ‘bad luck’.

There are hundreds of brilliant students, who often show great potential, but due to one reason or another, normally attributed to ‘bad luck’, fail to rise to the occasion at the actual IELTS. This is because they ‘see’ themselves as ‘average’ in their mind’s eye and so the circumstances become such that they get what their sub conscious mind sees as the truth.

Actualization of thoughts is a well-known and well-documented phenomenon. There are as yet no complete scientific explanations for it. However, branches of studies like Psycho-Cybernetics and NLP (Neuro Linguistic Programming) have shown that a person’s inner reality can change his/her outer reality, and more importantly, a person can considerably influence his/her inner reality to achieve the goal he seeks.

The most effective way to do this is to regularly bring up your most vivid and motivating Winner’s picture in your mind, play the scene over and over and see, feel and hear as if you are already there.

If you spur your imagination with belief, desire, and expectancy, and train it to visualize your goals so that you see, feel, hear, taste, and touch them, you will get what you want. Evoking a feeling of winning gears up your sub consciousness towards success. You can make no mistakes. **You get ‘Lucky’**.

I like most others, was finding the going too tough. It was getting too much to balance college, family, friends and the IELTS. I decided to step back and take a hard look at why I was doing all this. Was it just to get an 8 in the IELTS? Certainly not, my purpose was much greater than that. I wanted to go to a Top Med school, start my own consultancy and become financially independent.

I have a couple books that I read which are (for me) highly motivating and bring back my Big Picture in focus. One of them is a watershed book in my life: The Fountainhead by Ayn Rand. Every page of that book is about people sacrificing all else to achieve their dream... it inspires me.

The other one is Rich Dad, Poor Dad, or one of his series. My whole reason for studying for the IELTS is far greater than just getting a good score... it re-motivates me... gets me back into the bigger picture. Keeping this big picture in focus helps me get in the 'flow' and things just seem to go brilliantly from there.

Thelma Sweeney (IELTS 8)

11. The Winning Traits

11.1 How Winners Plan

Getting a good IELTS score is vital to you and you must have impeccable plans to achieve this Goal.

Keep in mind that no one person has enough knowledge, experience or wisdom to become a winner on his own. In today's specialized world, we all need expert inputs to become 'Winners'. This is as true of the IELTS as any other field.

In order to turn your burning desire into reality, you must make a solid 'bullet-proof' plan. It does not matter if your initial plan is not successful. You can always learn from your experience and re-plan.

Remember, **'A Winner never Quits and a Quitter never Wins'**

Winners plan their work and work their plans till they achieve their goals.

As mentioned elsewhere in the book, your plan needs to take into account your strengths and weaknesses, the kind of books you need to prepare, the training/coaching you may require etc.

11.2 Beware of your Biggest Enemy

Procrastination is the grave in which opportunity is buried.

- Anonymous

One of the biggest enemies of an IELTS Winner is ‘Procrastination’. There are people who always wait for things to be ‘just right’ before they start a new project, new job or something worthwhile.

Winners are decisive. They know that there will never be that *elusive, Exactly Right moment*. They start where they stand, with whatever tools they have at their disposal, knowing that they will improve their plans as they go along.

A quick analysis of the IELTS Winners shows that almost all of them are quick in taking decisions, and very slow in changing them, be it bigger decisions as to whether to take the IELTS at all and if yes, when? Or smaller decisions as to whether to change an answer choice because they weren’t sure of the answer.

11.3 How Persistence pays

If I had to select one quality, one personal characteristic that I regard as being most highly correlated with success, whatever the field, I would pick the trait of persistence and determination. The will to endure to the end, to get knocked down seventy times and get up off the floor saying, "Here comes number seventy-one!"

Richard M. DeVos

The following is an outline of one of the most well known personalities in History. This is probably the greatest example of how persistence can face all odds.

- Ø 1831: Failed in business.
- Ø 1832: Defeated for State Legislature
- Ø 1832: Could not get into law school
- Ø 1833: Failed in business
- Ø 1836: Had nervous breakdown
- Ø 1838: Defeated for Speaker
- Ø 1843: Defeated for Congress nomination
- Ø 1848: Lost re-nomination
- Ø 1849: Rejected for land Officer
- Ø 1854: Defeated for US Senate

Ø 1856: Defeated for vice President Nomination

Ø 1858: Ran for U.S. Senate again - again he lost.

Ø 1860: Elected president of the United States.

Yes, the above list of failures is the story of none other than *Abraham Lincoln*.

Lincoln was born into a poor family, faced defeats and setbacks throughout his life, yet did not give up. And because he did not give up, he became one of the greatest statesmen that ever lived and left an indelible impression on the rest of mankind.

Of course, the failure that you might encounter on your road to the IELTS would be trivial compared to the ones above.

Hardly anyone has achieved success without facing setback. What separates the Winners from the rest is their indomitable courage and persistence in the light of unrelenting hardships & failures.

In the words of Roy whose persistence finally paid off with a score of 7...

I am pleased to announce that I scored 7 in the IELTS.

One thing that clearly comes out of my performance is that anyone willing to work hard can get a good score. I am no exception to this rule. It's just that some have worked on their skills before and others have to do NOW.

My previous scores:

1st Attempt: 5

2nd Attempt: 6

Final Attempt: 7

All these were over a time span of 1 year and 3 months.

After my last test in Oct, I was really in the dumps. I desperately wanted a score of 7+ in order to stand a chance at the top schools I wanted to get to. I did (another!) thorough analysis and realized that my major weak area was writing. So this time I really worked on it. At the same time I practiced much tougher questions. I can tell you if you have done

them, understanding and developing strategies how to attack them, u will be very comfortable with the questions on actual test.

At my third attempt, I got some tricky questions in the beginning. U will see the difficulty of questions jump up and down... some tough followed by pretty easy. So don't panic and just focus on question right in front of you. In the middle I needed scratch paper, raised my hand and no one came... the proctor guy was strolling in the corridor. I got up, went outside, cursed him (mentally...) and brought the new scratch paper. Be cool and focussed throughout the test.

Writing has been my weak area. But this time I had practiced enough to be sure to crack every question

Finally, if u believe that u can score good and presently have a bad score... Don't give up...

Roy (IELTS: 7)

12. How Burnouts can ruin you prep & how you can avoid them

Burn Out occurs where people who have been highly committed lose interest and motivation. Typically it will occur in hard working, hard training, hard driven people, who become emotionally, psychologically or physically exhausted. These are typical characteristics of the IELTS winners and so they need to be ever more watchful for the first signs of an imminent burnout.

When does it happen?

You are too nice and simply cannot say 'NO', be it at college, home or with friends. This ends up with further commitments and responsibilities on your time and concentration, and you find yourself unable to do anything to your satisfaction.

You are trying to achieve too much too quickly.

Your source of emotional support (Parents/friends) has suddenly gone away from you.

You have a perfectionist Tutor.

This will often manifest itself in complete disinterest in your work, low motivation levels and perhaps quitting your prep completely.

In the words of Hemant, who had a typical case of prep burnout, but finally managed to recover and get a score of 7.5

I am emotionally and psychologically drained after just about a month in IELTS preparation. I do not know why, but I am taking these things too seriously and personally.

Just last week I started solving Cambridge. I try to touch Reading and Writing for at least 25 questions. But, there is absolutely no consistency. One day, I will have 80% accuracy, the next day I will be just about 50% right. This gets me depressed and I find myself lost in

prep strategies. I also tried to create an error log, but every time error is somewhat different than before.

This has started affecting my day to day life. I do not know when to find more time for preparation. The whole day I will be thinking about IELTS, IELTS and only IELTS.

May be I should start meditating every day just to get me out of this state. My wife has started worrying about me.

I hope things will fall in place soon. Otherwise I am afraid that I may just lose interest in IELTS.

.....So I left studying for 2-3 days and just had fun.... After that - I focussed on the Cambridge book...made a schedule...and managed to get it right.

Hemant (IELTS 7.5)

12.1 Recognizing the Symptoms

Burn Outs can be Mental or Physical, however in either case, both your body and your mind will feel the pain.

Some of these symptoms can occur as a One Off. You need to worry about a burnout ONLY if these symptoms appear repeatedly and with intensity.

Ø *Feelings of intense fatigue*

Ø *Vulnerability to infections*

Ø *Feeling of a lack of control over commitments*

Ø *An incorrect belief that you are accomplishing less*

Ø *Loss of energy and sense of purpose*

Ø *Increasing detachment from relationships*

Ø *Frustration with you scores*

Ø *Repeating the same mistakes again and again*

Ø *Erratic performance on tests*

12.2 Getting out of it

Cut away the low yielding work.

Re-evaluate and prioritize your goals. Accept that you will have to give up some of the things you like, at least temporarily.

If people/tasks demand too much time and energy, become less sympathetic and less approachable.

Get involved with other people who are preparing for the IELTS while having other commitments.

Get support of friends and family in reducing Stress

Protect yourself from exhaustion, get quality sleep, have a healthy balanced diet, and relaxing hobbies.

For a majority of the IELTS Winners, there comes a point in their preparation when their performance goes steeply downwards. This can be very frustrating and highly unnerving.

In the words of Tina:

'For me the Burnout point came when less than a week before the exam, I took a Practice Test and got only a 5. The stress you feel is killer esp. after all the preparation you've put in. And the worst part is that on analyzing your performance there is so much that hits you that's so simple. While doing the test, you are also thinking about twenty other things.

You were too worried about the time you had left. You were not concentrating for that split second.

You didn't read the question properly - you tried to nervously scan it and immediately put something down on paper.

You were worried about how this test score will relate with your actual IELTS score.

You worry about what your friends will think if you do badly, all of them know you're giving this exam, and you begin to wonder whether all the sacrifices of parties and outings you

made were actually worth it.

You begin to wonder if this was all a big mistake and you should just stick with your plain-Jake routine and forget about that career that's waiting for you.

It's perhaps at these times that you just need to regain control of your life and know that ultimately you're in command. The IELTS is just another exam (although it seems like you've been preparing for it since you were in your diapers) and that number you get isn't going to tell you how intelligent you are or how well you're going to do in life or even how nice a person you are. After all it is one of the things you're going to have to do to get into a Top School. That's it.

*So whenever the IELTS gets to you (and it will) - put away your books, go for a drive, spend time with your friends, watch a soppy movie but get some true R & R and DON'T think about the M-word. Remember your mental peace is most important. If you have a superior force of nature to pray, there is nothing like it!' **Tina (IELTS 9)***

13. How Winners avoid the ‘Average’ Mindset

Given the difficulties & hurdles of the IELTS, it is only too easy to fall in the average mindset and start working towards an average score. However, every Winner has learned to cope effectively with pressure, and win the battle of the mind.

Avoiding the average Mindset means the willingness to block out negative thoughts & events and to “trust the source“. It implies learning to embrace nervousness, unfamiliar surroundings and to reappraise them as signs of readiness and preparation for the big event.

The mediocre mindset is mentally and emotionally very comfortable. It means you will never face failure. It means you never set up yourself for heartache and disappointment.

Winners separate themselves from the pack by going after your quest. They never give up their dream because it is not “comfortable” or “realistic”. Remember and take note that 98% of the others did that. Are you going to follow them?

The “average mind set” student is the one who says he will TRY rather than he will DO. “Oh well I will TRY it but it probably won’t work “. The word TRY is a weak motivational word. You must get into a “DO“ mode and then create a mindset in which your commitment level is more enhanced as are your determination and persistence. If you commit yourself to this “DO” mode and fail, it merely means that you did not do it this time, but will do it next time. The “DO” mindset is not easily intimidated by the “TRY” mindset.

Developing the Winning Mindset

Here are **four steps** towards developing a great mindset.

1. Trust the power of your pulsating, throbbing desire and have strong belief in your dreams. If you cannot believe in your dream, then no one else will. You are responsible for your own success.
2. Complete, comprehensive commitment. Achieving your full potential is **only earned through effort**. If you are not totally committed to achieving your dream, then you probably didn’t want it very

much anyway.

This is my current IELTS study schedule: I wake up at 5 am and study for about 2 hours, then leave for college at around 8. Then I when I get back, I start studying again at 8pm to around 11pm. It's so draining!!! Although I do get to practice/ study more now compared to my study schedule a year ago when I would only study for about an hour weekdays and weekends. I can only hope that all my hard work pays off the second time around.

Jeet (IELTS 7: Second Attempt)

3. Avoid people who have a negative/average mindset. Quite often negative comments come from family or close friends. It is not that they mean any harm; they probably are trying to slow you down so that you don't get over stressed or face disappointments. Never allow these to infiltrate your thinking with negative thoughts.

Remember that is it all right to feel good about your prep when things are going well, but it is even more important when they are not going so well.

4. Get the Big picture; ask yourself why you are doing this. Define what you finally want to accomplish.

Train the Brain for success, and never ever give up on your dream. The ultimate mindset is the satisfaction that you are giving it all in going after your dream.

14. IELTS Winners countdown to the D Day...

IELTS Winners, like most test takers are not immune from anxiety. However well prepared you are, the fact is that you are competing against the Best in the World.

Although, there is a wide variation in the pre-test behaviour, a majority of the IELTS winners do the following.

14.1 A Week before the Test

1. Evaluate thoroughly where you stand. Use the time remaining before the test to shore up your weak points. But make sure not to neglect your strong areas; after all, this is where you'll rack up most of your points.
2. Work on as many questions as you possibly can. Keep that error log and review it religiously. When solving the problems, try and figure out what is being asked for and what approach is the best. Review correct and incorrect answers.
3. Replicate test conditions at all times. That means timing all your problems, using only pencils and limited scratch paper, re-drawing all figures, and working at least in 70 minutes blocks to ensure that your endurance is built up.
4. Do at least a few full-length practice tests before taking the real one. You must also do the Writing portion as it will contribute to mental fatigue to a certain degree.
5. Practice working on test material, preferably a full-length test, at the **same time of day that your test is scheduled for**, as if it were the real Test Day.
- 6. TIME YOURSELF ACCURATELY, WITH THE SAME DEVICE AND IN THE SAME MANNER IN WHICH YOU PLAN TO KEEP TRACK OF TIME ON TEST DAY. (THE COMPUTER HAS A CLOCK ON THE SCREEN THAT YOU'LL SEE DURING THE TEST, BUT IT'S GOOD TO TRACK YOUR OWN**

TIME AS WELL.)

7. VISIT THE TESTING CENTRE IF YOU CAN. SOMETIMES SEEING THE ACTUAL ROOM WHERE YOUR TEST WILL BE ADMINISTERED AND TAKING NOTICE OF LITTLE THINGS – SUCH AS THE KIND OF DESK YOU'LL BE WORKING ON, WHETHER THE ROOM IS LIKELY TO BE HOT OR COLD, ETC. – MAY HELP TO CALM YOUR NERVES. AND IF YOU'VE NEVER BEEN TO THE TEST CENTRE, VISITING BEFOREHAND IS A GOOD WAY TO ENSURE THAT YOU DON'T GET LOST ON TEST DAY.

14.2 The Day before the Test

Take a final full length test to build your confidence and then try to relax and get a good night's rest. Try to avoid doing intensive studying the day before the test. There's little you can do to help yourself at this late date and you may just wind up exhausting yourself and burning out.

Review a few key concepts, get together everything you'll need for the Test Day and then take the night off entirely. Go to see a movie, rent a video, or watch some TV. Try not to think too much about the test.

Get enough sleep. Avoid caffeine.

14.3 The Test Day

- Ø Here are some last-minute reminders to help guide your work on Test Day:
- Ø Read each question stem carefully, and reread it before making your final selection.
- Ø Don't get bogged down in the middle of any section. You may find questions that appear later to be more to your liking. So don't freak. Eliminate answer choices, guess, and move on.
- Ø Start strong. The first few questions are important for your confidence, so spend as much time as necessary on the early ones.
- Ø Drink a lot of water and eat light on the test day. Sometimes, it helps to go to the Gym as exercise increases the ability to think and concentrate. You can also take light food or snacks with you for the breaks.
- Ø Confidence is the key. Accentuate the positives, and don't dwell on the negatives! Your attitude and outlook are crucial to your performance on test day.

14.4 Those Five Hours

- Ø Trust in yourself and your preparation. Stay calm at all times, and never, under any circumstance panic. Be aware of your pace, but don't obsess over time to the point that you can't focus on the problem at hand, this will only rush your answers and cloud your natural reasoning.
- Ø Give each question a good honest effort and don't completely give up on any question if you think you can solve it with a little more time. This is a difficult balancing act, as you don't want to spend too much time on any given question, but those few questions that you are close to solving may make the difference between a high and low score.
- Ø Focus only on the question in front of you. Don't worry about previous questions or trying to judge how you're doing.
- Ø Take all your breaks and use that time to clear your head and to psyche yourself up for the next section.
- Ø If you feel yourself straying towards the end of the test, take a short mental break, or otherwise dig deep for those last reserves to pull you through. It's no time to be throwing in the towel when you're so close to the finish.
- Ø Realize that your final score is NOT a reflection of your intelligence. A low score does not make you a loser or anything less than you actually are. The IELTS is not life or death. It's one test of many "tests" that you'll encounter in life. But do be honest with yourself. If you feel that you can really do better as reflected in your practise exams then definitely give the test another honest shot. Nerves play a critical role, but are less of a factor the second time around.
- Ø Plan on spending at least 5 hrs at the centre. Don't get in to the mood of finishing the test quickly, especially as you reach the last few questions.
- Ø Focus your attention on the test. Don't waste time and energy worrying, thinking about the consequences of not doing well, or wondering what others are doing.

Ø If you don't know an answer, take a reasonable guess and move along.

If you start to feel anxious, practice your relaxation techniques. Use anxiety as a cue to relax. Closing your eyes, take three deep breaths and go back to the task.

During the exam, try not to think about how you're doing. It's like a baseball player who's thinking about the crowd's cheers and the sportswriters and his contract as he steps up to the plate: There's no surer way to strike out. Instead, focus on the question-by-question task of picking an answer choice. The correct answer is there: You don't have to come up with it; it's sitting right there in front of you! Concentrate on each question, each passage, each problem and you'll be much more likely to hit a home run.

After all the hard work you've done preparing for and taking the IELTS, you want to make sure you take time to celebrate afterwards. Plan to get together with friends the evening after the test. Relax, have fun, let loose. After all, you have lots to celebrate: You prepared for the test ahead of time. You did your best. You're going to get a good score. The above tips should ensure that you have a Super Successful Test Day. However, if you are an especially nervous during test, the following chapter on Managing Test Anxiety should help.

15. Managing Test Anxiety

15.1 What does test anxiety feel like?

- ∅ Some students experience mainly physical symptoms, such as headaches, nausea, faintness, feeling too hot or too cold, etc.
- ∅ Others experience more emotional symptoms, such as crying easily, feeling irritable, or getting frustrated quickly.
- ∅ The major problem of test anxiety is usually its effect on thinking ability; it can cause you to blank out or have racing thoughts that are difficult to control.
- ∅ Although many students feel some level of anxiety when writing exams, most can cope with that anxiety and bring it down to a manageable level.

15.2 What can you do to control test anxiety?

- Be **well prepared** for the test.
- Include as much **self-testing** in your review as possible.
- Maintain a **healthy lifestyle**: get enough sleep, good nutrition, exercise, some personal "down" time, and a reasonable amount of social interaction.
- As you anticipate the exam, **think positively**, e.g., "I can do OK on this exam. I've studied and I know my stuff."
- Engage in **"thought stopping"** if you find that you are worrying a lot, mentally comparing yourself to your peers, or thinking about what others may say about your performance on this exam.
- Before you go to bed on the night before the exam, make sure to **collect together anything that you will need** for the exam -- pen, pencil, ruler, ID, etc. Double-check the time of the exam and the location.
- Set the alarm clock and then get a **good night's sleep** before the exam.
- Get to the exam **on time - not too late but not too early**.
- As you work on the exam, **focus only on the exam**, not on what others are doing or on thinking about past exams or future goals.
- If you feel very anxious in the exam, take a few minutes to **calm yourself down**. Stretch your arms and legs and then relax them again. Do this a couple of times. Take a few slow deep breaths. Do some positive internal self-talk; say to your-self, "I will be OK, I can do this." Then direct your focus on questions; link questions to their corresponding lecture and/or chapter.
- If the exam is more difficult than you anticipated, try to **focus and just do your best**. It might be enough to get you through.
- When the exam is over, **treat yourself**. If you don't have any other commitments, maybe you can go to a movie with a friend. If you have to study for other exams, you may have to postpone a larger break, but a brief break can be the pick up that you need.

You can take control of test anxiety so that your performance on a test reflects your real standing in that course.

15.3 So How Do You Get To Be Self-Confident?

Self talk. Research shows that the self-talk of test-anxious students almost always tends to be negative and self-defeating. "Everyone in this class is smarter and faster than I am." "I always mess up on tests." "If I don't do well on this exam, then I'll flunk the course." "These are trick questions." "This is a weed-out course."

Become aware of what you say to yourself. Try writing your negative thoughts and then disputing each one with a positive statement. Start to encourage yourself as you would a friend. Repeating your positive statements to yourself will help reprogram your mind for success instead of for failure.

16. Should you ever cancel your score?

It is very important to remain calm during the exam. I personally did not feel that I was doing too well during the exam. In fact, most people who achieved high scores felt they underperformed during the exam. Remain calm and focus on completing the exam in the allotted time.

No matter how bad you feel its going, do not cancel the scores. I thought listening went very badly, and felt I missed a few questions, esp. since I took a guess on the third questions.

By the end of the test, I was in a good mind to cancel the score. However, something within me forced me to go ahead and I was SHOCKED to get a score of 7.

- Keith (IELTS: 7)

Nobody has a good explanation for this, but a majority of high scorers always feel that they have not done well enough at the test, especially by the time they reach the end.

It is best not to cancel your score unless you have an absolutely solid reason to do so.

The worse that could happen is that you will need to take the IELTS again, but that is something you would need to do in any case.

If you have done really badly, at least you will know the section wise split of where things have gone wrong and you can always put more effort in that direction.